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ISSUE 23 SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1979

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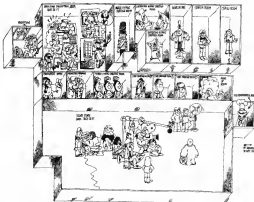
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Published by the Victorian Film Corporation, it is the most detailed listing of services, facilities, personnel, production companies, state and federal law, distributors and exhibitors, media, unions, guilds, location advice, useful contacts, etc., yet compiled in this State.

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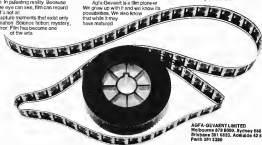
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TIM BURSTALL

Tim Burstall is Australia's most profile film director, and probably its most controversial. In an industry where reticence about issues, on and off the screen, is the rule, Burstall stands apart with his passion for confrontation and energy at the centre of his films. Often accused of selling out to commercial interests, Burstall is, in fact, consistent to the belief he shares with Ken G. Hall that the true business of a filmmaker is to entertain his audience — and make a profit.

Burstall has made eight features to date, including *Stork*, *Alvin Purple*, *Eliza Fraser* and *The Last of the Knucklemen*. In all, he has confronted notions of Australian life, though often with a sense of humor. Burstall is working on an adaptation of D.H. Lawrence's *Kangaroo*; a novel he feels "discusses the important issue of whether Australia is a pre- or post-conscious society. That is, have we rejected the European notions of sensibility and awareness?"

In the following interview, the first he has agreed to do with *Cinema Papers* since its inception in 1973, Burstall talks to Scott Munnay about his film, his role at Mosaic and his views on Australian cinema and life in the 1970s.

I began by wanting to be a writer, hoping to write what one used to call successfully the G.A.N. — "the Great Australian Novel." That was when I was at university in those days in the late 1940s and early 1950s; the topic discussed at parties was not a film, as it is these days, but the latest novel. For instance, we would have been excited by the idea Saul Bellow, or Larkin Jew. Film was certainly part of that era, but the idea of becoming a filmmaker was regarded as being outside our range. There were no Australian films being made and getting a start in filmmaking just didn't seem possible.

Where did you go after university?

To the National Film Library. It wasn't especially looked on film, but it seemed one way of getting into writing. The only organization then making films in Australia was the Commonwealth Film Unit, and I felt I might be able to make my way there from the National Film Library and get work as a scriptwriter.

The job (Film Officer Grade 1) consisted of looking at documentaries for four hours every day — "appraising" them, as it was called, and deciding whom they should be referred to. A lot of this sort

(from *Wood Pulp to Newspaper, Bulletin Arts and Crafts*) ultimately gave me a distance for the whole documentary scene. It then became involved in scientific editing and writing for the Antarctic Division.

When did you decide to try filmmaking?

Probably after I saw Lawrence's *Crim Blanc* (The White White Soldiers) at the Melbourne Film Festival. I knew one couldn't make expensive Hollywood-style films in Australia, but one like *Crim Blanc* seemed possible.

My first film was *The Pelias*, which I followed with several art films. I was a friend of painters like Arthur Boyd and John Perceval, and I seemed only and expensive to make films on their work.

Sebastian the Fox

You then made "Sebastian the Fox" for the ABC. . . .

Yes. The significant thing from a technical point of view about Sebastian was that he couldn't speak. He could only communicate his feelings by blinking his eyes, tilting his tail and so on. No

attempt was made to disguise the fact that he was a puppet; his origins were quite obvious.

The world Sebastian inhabited was full of big, rather weird adults who were nearly always seen as comically wrong-headed, pompous or ideologically tyrannical. Sebastian occasionally linked up with children apart from that he was a larger.

The original title song, for which George Dreyfus wrote the music and I the lyrics, goes like this:
*As the bush there is a creature and
it's not a bloody cat
It's not a kangaroo or a wombat
or a possum
Oh he wears a tail and whiskers and
the owner there and there
That's Sebastian, Sebastian,
Sebastian Fox.*

Whenever did it happen that there is a crowd in your head?

Who put the bucket on the door that
supplied on your head?

Why was it pushed your pants?
Who pulled your money bag?
That's Sebastian, Sebastian Fox or

Sebastian was a pure innocent. In terms of psychology, he was the all — made representative: one's wishes expressed directly along the lines of the pleasure principle. Sebastian was able to do dequaint things and still be loved by children because his idiosyncrasy was always directed at the rules. He

was never wicked or anti-social. One can see a very obvious development from Sebastian to people like Stork, who also was an innocent, and Alvin, another innocent. For me Sebastian is one of the first serious Co hero.

Apparently you ran into some censorship problems with the ABC over "Sebastian" . . .

Yes. The ABC would accept that a brave little sailor could drop a rock on the head of a giant in a Green's fairy tale, but wouldn't allow something similar in Sebastian. They had a set of sinister school teacher values, which meant that everybody in a children's program was supposed to act in an exemplary way. Consequently, almost nothing could happen.

There was a element of this attitude in the Commonwealth Film Unit as well. They were not so much into stories as lighthearted and worthy public-approved themes.

This puritanism exists today. Take, for example, the often caustic reaction to films like "Alvin Purple" and "Peterson" . . .

Sure, but the puritanism of today originates from intellectual elitism. The Women's Lib reaction to

(getting 25 per cent of the net profit). The production of \$12,000 was shared between Columbia and Ebbens Screen.

People hostile to the distributors and Columbia knew that the film for action movies before releasing it. True, but Columbia wasn't able to get a cinema until seven months after it had agreed to take the film, and since Columbia doesn't have its own chain of cinemas, that doesn't surprise me. It was then put into the Forum in Melbourne, which was a bit of a novelty for them, but it was put in at Easter, a good time, and everybody did their best for it.

The major problem was that it was a festival-type film and it needed the support, just like a *Faded Paradise*, of critics like John Bennett. Unfortunately, though the film was screened in

the ABC and Film Australia, which Sydney did.

For a long time, conspiracy theories were held about distributors. Did you ever subscribe to them?

No. That feeling was very portrayed in Sydney, much more so than in Melbourne. The Sydney producers gave the distributorship interests to our enemies and I think much of my reputation as a sold-out bastard emanated from my public statements that one should work with the distributors because they were our natural allies.

It was my experience, when dealing with Village-Roadshow, and with Colin Jones and Tom Nicholson at Columbia, that the distributors were sympathetic to the

idea of an Australian film industry. They were, in fact, keen to give it a go then the critics and our so-called custodians of film culture. These people neither saw the possibility of growth, nor that the Australian audience might be interested in seeing itself on film. I don't think the bulk of these critics were sufficiently interested in their own society to be able to recognise those things which related to it. They were apparently far more at home in Paris and London, not Melbourne or Sydney.

How do you feel about "2000 Weeks" today?

I have a special place in my heart for it, because it was my first feature and in some ways autobiographical. But I view it now I see it, except for the few enemy points which are easily in the blackbooks.

I think of the first 10 years of my film work, up to and including *2000 Weeks* as my apprenticeship. *Steak* exhibits much more control and the breakthrough with *Steak* was that it had a script with plenty of energy. I don't believe the script in *2000 Weeks* is bad, so much as a question of actors being asked to say undesirable things, and not desirable things. It was too abstracted, too difficult to grasp and too much of it was in an intellectualised form, instead of action.

Steak

What came after "2000 Weeks"?



Above: Mel (Melba Moore) with her son, 1980. Left: Brian James. Right: John Bennett and Brian James in *Steak*, the film which marks the beginning of the renaissance.

recession didn't, everything written about it was a put-down. This had little to do with *2000 Weeks* itself. Around the end of 1970 the whole atmosphere seemed to change. It had something to do with Gordon's new nationalism, the cultural identity thing emerging. It was as if we stopped being embarrassed about having ourselves quickly. I think of the Australian film industry as starting in 1971, with *Steak*. *2000 Weeks* came before the change, though it and *The Naked Runway* were important stepping-stones.

I see this revival as growing out of a theatrical renaissance, and it was my accident the film industry began in Melbourne. You had *Steak*, which grew out of David Williamson's first play at La Mama, and the Barry McKenna films, which grew out of the Ebbes Estrange figure Barry Humphries had developed in Melbourne and then taken to London. And you had Abba, which was a Melbourne film.

Another reason was that Melbourne was poorer, more than Sydney, to showie values. We didn't have the deadly tradition of



Well, soon after we had finished the film Pat Ryan, David Black, Rob Copping and I pulled out of *Steak* films and formed *Black and Copping*. There was to make commercialism, which would then finance features. We then started off on a number of films, one of them was the short, *Hot Cakes of the Earth*, which was done for the Producers and Directors Guild of Australia. This was the first time I worked with John Powers [*Land of the Ancestress*] who wrote the script.

After that, I did *Gotting Back to Nothing*, a documentary on the World Surf Championships. A group of production houses, including Filmhouse, Artime and Black and Copping put up the money when they heard that ABC America had pulled out of covering the event. We knew we had a certain sale, so we forged ahead.

Then, when the Experimental Film Fund began, I applied for money to make *Fish*. I had been very involved by an incident at La Mama involving John Rosser's *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, which was based on what had happened to Alex, Alex's name was changed when it was first performed.

Rosser's play had a group of people wearing an armband, and then the police would arrest them. The detectives were played by people like Peter Cummins. One night, however, when the cast and audience were leaving after a performance, they were arrested in the car park by real police and marched down to the Carlton police station.

It seemed like a fancy idea for a film, which would have been a cinema movie version of what had happened. But once I started on it I found all sorts of references from the people involved and had to give it up. As I had already been given \$7500 by the EFF, I went back to my assistant, Fred Schepers, and asked "Can I go ahead and shoot a play of David Williamson's *Steak*?" It was called *Steak*. I had agreed and I started looking for more money. I got a commitment of \$1000 from Black and Copping and the rest I raised by looking some of my Arthur Bond prizes. We raised about \$21,000, and decided to begin shooting in the end, the film cost about \$20,000.

We released it surreptitiously at the Palace during Christmas, and advertised it through John Singleton's advertising agency, Sonnet, which had done some ABC testing on the film.

Was your decision to film with the film at the Palace a reaction to Columbia's handling of "2000 Weeks"?

In one way, yes. It wasn't that I thought we, the producers, would do better than the distributors, but that we wanted to prove to the distributors that there was an audience for Australian films. Of course, this is what John

Murray had done when he readdressed *The Naked Bay*.

How successful was the run at the Palace?

It took \$50,000 in six weeks, returning to as \$20,000. I then showed the film to Roadshow, but they turned it down. So we hired Harry Miller's Metro Theatre in Perth, St. as well as the Village cinema in Sydney. We also took it to Mowat and Melbourne theatres.

This way we managed to raise our takings to \$37,000, but still nobody would take over the distribution of the film. We then took it to Sydney and five-walled it at Mowat. It was only then that we got our first offer, which was from Hoyts. But Hoyts would only give me a sublease, and couldn't guarantee the film would recover \$30,000 (the amount needed to get me out of the block). So I took the film to Greater Union, which also knocked it back. I then returned to Melbourne and decided to try Village again. This time Graham Burke decided to take the film. It ended doing infinitely better than anybody thought possible. It took \$224,000 in film hire and returned to me at about \$150,000, that was on a deposit of only \$60,000.

Was the decision to set up *Bluey* based on the success of *Stark*?

There was two factors certainly the success of *Stark* impressed Village-Roadshow.



Bill Fisher as the mother in *The Child*. Her still's episode of *Libido*.

Graham Burke in particular, but equally important was the pressure from the Tariff Board Inquiry of 1973. There was a tremendous feeling at the time that we had to have a film industry. (The Australian Film Development Corporation had already been formed.) Village-Roadshow, which had its headquarters in Melbourne,

entered into a partnership with Block and Copping, and my company, Tim Barnwell and Associates. Block and Copping and I each had 25 per cent. Roadshow 50 per cent.

The important thing to remember was that we had put up the money to make our first film, once *Stark* was established, we, the production arm, had to put up half the money. That was how I worked all *Elke* Fraser, when Block and Copping pulled out because the figures were getting too high for them. If it was *Libido*, we just ran it, if it made a profit, we converted ourselves to having a back into making more films.

So I was the producer, director and financier (25 per cent) of my own projects. This placed me in a very different position from anyone else in the industry. Terrible in one way, but hardly the cushy position a lot of industry people saw me as occupying.

Libido

What did you do after *Stark*?

Libido, which was the first film to move away from cocker comedy. As you know, it was a pornographic feature consisting of four sub-narrated stories by Craig McGregor, Ed Porter, Thomas Kennedy and David Williamson. Chris Menz produced the project for the PDGA with John Murray.

The Williamson story was the

events. Another, though probably unconscious, motive was that I wanted to make it more autobiographical.

I was brought up in England in an extremely home in the north called Woodford. In those days one had manners, and rarely, in fact, one's parents. You never ate with them, though there was something called High Tea, when they would sometimes come in and give you a kiss. But the person you ate it, you fell over and hurt your leg, was your sister, not your mother. My mother was the source of violence, and harsh reprimand expectations. So, there was a split focus thing, that is, between me to whom you owed allegiance, and the one who was truly chosen. This element — the mother/government split in Porter's story — was what I was attracted to developing.

I suspect, by the way, the split between the two women in *2000 Weeks* was influenced by this experience.

What was the budget of *Libido*?

The PDGA received a grant of about \$23,000 from the Arts Council. John Murray's budget was about \$7000, as was David Baker's and Fred Schepisi's. I went in for special pleading on the grounds that my episode was a proof piece. It was finally given \$13,000, though the episode's true cost, given delays, etc., would have been closer to \$23,000.

All the actors and technicians received some payment, except for the Swinburne film students who helped us out, while the directors and producers deferred their entire fees.

How has the film fared commercially?

I think the outlay was \$75,000, which was closer to \$120,000 if you took the differences into account. The return at the time, between \$40,000 and \$75,000. Now, if we sell it in television for another \$50,000, we would be in the clear. It hasn't been sold yet, but the PDGA has it in hand.

The PDGA has often discussed doing another pornographic film...

After we finished *Libido*, I was very keen on the idea of doing one each film a year. It seemed the best way of bleeding young directors up the feature business. After all, it was Schepisi's first film, and Baker's and Murray's. I took care, except for John who was most reliably helped by the critics and has never returned here. *Libido* was a great help in their careers.

What was intended as the next film?

Something called *The Bad*. This was what we thought we had to construct the stories, and each revolved round a brass bed. A bed is a good prot-

because it is something on which one can be lost, live, make love and die.

One story was written by Alan Marshall, which Mel Bryson was set to do, another by Morris Lane called *Ample Ample*, which Ross Brown was to direct, then was a John Favara story written for Simon Wincer, and a fourth by Max Richards, which Rod Kruse was to direct.

What happened to the project?

Although failure can be very diverse, failure can be most mean to *The Libido* scenario, curiously enough, generated a lot of television and publicity, and it took a long time to get another project moving. But once we did, we still couldn't raise sufficient money. The VFL was prepared to invest, but the Australian Film Commission wouldn't agree to the party they said participation films were finished and that while *Libido* was free to do, the idea was no longer viable. I think they were quite wrong, and it was a great pity.

Alvin Purple

Next came *Alvin*, which was Haggard's first venture into film-making.

Yes, but it was originally intended that it would be Polanski. An announcement was made in the press, in which Al Finnis, David Williamson and I said we were going to make a new film. Unfortunately, David was working very hard — he was still at Swinburn — and couldn't finish the screenplay for *Alvin Purple*. Roadshow's decision. So, we began looking around for other ideas.

At that time, Roadshow had had a very successful run with *Frank's Denim*, and there appeared to be an opening for an Australian *Denim*. I was looking for stories visiting writers like Bob Laing, Frank Hardy, Williamson and Barry Oakley. I had 26 names in all, and one of these was by Alan Haggard, called *Alvin Purple*. While the first half was some, the second was useless, but I thought I could chop off the front end and get an amazing 30-minute episode out of it. But as I bored further into all the stories, the *Denim* idea seemed lively, and we decided it was better to go with one idea. So I took the *Alvin Purple* story and developed it with Haggard, aiming at straight comedy. In the end, I rewrote quite a lot of it — the water-bed stuff, the chains, the turning of the McFarlane figure, which was serious in the original, into a character, a sex maniac.

Was *Alvin*'s original girlfriend (Elle McCann) a remnant of Haggard's serious second half?

and approached the AFDC, which she knocked off back then, as soon as Burke heard we had been knocked back — he is a very sarcastic man — he changed his mind and decided to support us. Berkeley, to be honest, fixed it very much when he saw it.

Was it a commercial success?

Yes, though it didn't do as well as *Alpha*. It only made about \$70,000, but after a television sale and an overseas sale it is doing really as well as *Alpha* *Killer* *Alpha*.

"Peterson" makes an interesting companion piece to "1000 Weeks".



Also in: The controversial fight sequence in *Peeples*, where Peterson tests out the limited action. Right: Mark John Waters is surrounded by his father's fans (George Hickey) in *Fad Play*.

Is that many of the elements are similar ...

That's right. *Peterson* is really a re-vamp of the earlier film, though there is a class difference. Will (Mark McManis) in *1000 Weeks* is a journalist who aspires to be a writer. Peterson (Jack Thompson) is an electrician who aspires to go to university. Will and Peterson have two women — again a split between the masses and the elite. In the case of Peterson, the masses represent an intellectual set of values, someone to whom he aspires, but who also grates on him, and he aspires, in terms of a whole series of cultural clashes. He comes from Moore Ponds, and she from the south side of the River.

In the case of *1000 Weeks*, Will's wife is an emotional. Reed of *Gilbey* (Jack), while the masses is a kind of someone additive to his life. It is a grotesque love affair.

Then there is the question of father-son relationships. The father in *1000 Weeks* is of the old puritan sort, and there has been a total breakdown in father-son relationship. In *Peterson*, the father is an

adoptive one. David Williamson wrote the role of Peterson specifically for Jack Thompson, and as Jack was an adopted son, we decided to exploit this. So we gave Peterson a middle-class background, but a whole lot of self-working-class or lower-middle-class complexes.

Every intellectual or academic character in your films is treated critically. There is not one who is likable ...

Yes, that is true. I suppose you have to look at my background for an answer. My father and my grandfather were professors, but it is a discipline [engineering] which is

not much earlier. For instance, there were no chairs of English Literature until 1900. In other words, by the time the novel was dying, the academic began to sit in on something worth studying. With film, it was to fight off the curvy of the theorists, culture values and resistance affairs and at the same time still think of as free — especially of the terrible burden of belief that the academics are now trying to pour over it. Most of them are unresponsive, school-teachers, rule-of-thumb people.

Do you link the academic culture in "Peterson" with Peterson's step-father who runs a church without any connection with, or belief in, God?

Absolutely. P. K. Leavis sits somewhere last. "The only argument for Philistinism I ever felt had any weight was the Anarchism in the First World War." I don't know what he meant exactly, except that the heretic Anarchism — related, healthy and with an anti-conformist view of life — had a few things to be used for him. So I certainly think that on opposite view of a reductive, common-sense education to a university professor was a productive thing to do.

I can remember a fight in Melbourne where a group of thugs removed from the streets outside a house and then moved in. The only three people who opposed them were me (a public school boy), a journalist who happened to be a violent freak, and a drop-out



different from what I think of a university as representing. My attitude to what we think of as the bourgeoisie side of university is that professors, lecturers and even schoolteachers have become the modern church. They don't seem to be a source of value any more. I think, for instance, the entry of the academic mind into an art form like the novel, while it didn't do any damage to it, certainly spoiled the art of it as a key art form of the 20th Century.

Do you mean academics like Richard Barthes?

Yes. The party was composed entirely of "various chap" who were saying that anything was happening. One of them said, "We libertarians are onwards, Tim," as he disappeared into the other room. It was the same syndrome one finds in others like Colin Bennett, who think that violence in a Hollywood report, not something that ever really happens in Australia.

I think the very unresponsiveness of Australian suburban life is connected with a kind of modernism of violence in all sorts of places — an anarchic desire to break the bloody thing apart.

It is at the party, particularly when Peterson goes to protect the children, that the audience comes to side with him ...

Yes, except I would have thought the problem with the film was it wasn't until he started to feel that people sided with him. I think the middle-classing tendency of the audience is with me earlier, but it is not until his woman starts kicking him in the back that the whole audience comes to believe him. Up to that point, I suspect they have been put off by a lot of his demonstrations of Australian manhood. Of course, I knew there was some thing which the university-educated, middle-class person would resent and dislike about Peterson, but I was prepared to risk that.

End Play

"End Play", which is based on a Russell Blackburn novel, is quite a departure ...

Yes. I wanted to get away from color material, and I thought of doing what a western, a western or a crime-thriller. Of these, *End Play* was the closest to me. It was just after *Shogun* and I thought a two-hander like *Fad Play* would be viable.

It is interesting to reflect how vividly you are trying to move away from color material, as the same time. Fred Schepers was doing *Dave's Playground*, *Peter Prentice at Blazing Rock* and so on. We all felt we had to move into something different, and under the scope.

Did you have a free hand in adapting the novel?

At the time I felt there were restrictions, but I suspect they were mostly in my mind. What interested me was the comparison between the two brothers. This led me to look at the actual possibilities of introducing a girl who had been the girlfriend of one, and then get off with the other — which is what I did. Perhaps I should have taken that idea further, even down to introducing a murder. That certainly would have given more energy to the middle of the film.

Many of the film's scenes were shot on a set. What effect did that have on the finished film?

It made it far more fluid than would have been possible had we shot on location. There was a major problem with the set, however, in that it was intended that it would open directly out into the garden. Unfortunately, we couldn't get the right man to build the exterior part of the set and had to give the idea away. That was, therefore, a bump

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AUSTRALIAN WOMEN FILMMAKERS: PART 4

JENI THORNLEY and MARTHA ANSARA

Barbara Alysas

Martha Ansara and Jeni Thornley are filmmakers whose work spans the history of feminist film production in Australia, and incorporates the varied styles that genre has encompassed. Very little has happened in the past 10 years of Australian feminist filmmaking in which at least one of them has not been involved.

Thornley has acted in several films directed by Ansara, and last year made her first film, *Musings*, which will judge Best Film in the General Section of the Greater Union Awards, and invited to the 1978 Flaherty Seminar in the U.S.

Ansara is best known as a screenwriter. Her screen credits include *Letters from Poland* (directed by Stephen Parkes), *Prisoners* (made by the Prisoners Action Group), and two films about Aboriginal Australia, *Alice Morgan's Bubbly Campdell*... *Old Father Now* and *Edie Coffey's My Survival as an Aboriginal*.¹

Ansara and Thornley met in 1968 at the inaugural meeting of the Sydney Women's Liberation group. A year later they began making *Film for Discussion*, a propaganda film that would, in Ansara's words, "show the things that feed a young, attractive girl to discover women's liberation".

It was the first feminist film to commence production in Australia, but not the first finished by the time it was completed (three others, *Living Together* (directed by Jane Groom), and survived by Jeni Thornley), *Women's Day* (made by Margaret Keen, Virginia Connolly, Kaye Martin, Robyn Murphy), and *Home* (made by Ragna Mørgen, Susan Varga, Barbara Levy, and Leonie Cronan) were already in distribution.

Film for Discussion was prepared in the Womansans Festival at the Sydney Film-makers Cooperative in 1973. It formed out to be a very sensitive and restrained film. Beginning with a montage sequence, borrowed in style and content from the work of Italian filmmaker Saverio Zavatta, it shows Thornley at work and at home, questioning the limited roles offered to women in Australian society.

Despite Ansara's reservations about film corporations, *Film for Discussion* was entered in the 1974 Greater Union Awards. However, outside the cinema, she and other members of the Sydney Women's Film Group, banded out leaflets which criticized the Greater Union Organization as "the thumb of the hand which is strangling the development of a native film industry". It added:

"Such a face as the Greater Union Awards raises several questions. This year the Australian film industry has presented forward just a few more waxes, with the production of several features under way and a good number of short films. How are we to judge their value? Does it help to put one against the other in competition? ... Can films really be measured by a few judges in a room? Because a film is complete only when people see it, we consider its content. Who was it meant for and for what purpose?"

Graham Shirley's *A Day Like Tomorrow* (which carried another protest by *Film for Discussion* but in a completely different style), won the documentary section of the awards that year. Comparing the two film reviewers Mike Harris wrote that *A Day Like Tomorrow* was a "far more capital piece of women's life propaganda than the inclusively staged and often ill-observed entry by the Sydney

Women's Film Group. While the latter did raise questions that need not just an answer but a solution, it over-reached and, in any case in this particular depre-chaucian, evoked the same reaction not just from Leon Klenfeth's *Over the Mountains* it was so morning as to create a distance — distanced took over. Or was it deliriousness?" He concluded, however, that "they're both thought-provoking and in that they're valuable".

Film for Discussion, however, is one of the most widely-screened Australian short films. Ansara estimates it has been seen by as many people as some of the more successful feature films. It has also found distributors in Britain and North America — a rare achievement for a short film.

In 1973, Ansara and Jane Oler co-ordinated the Women's Film Workshop, conducted with funds from the Intercine Training Program of the Film and Television School, 29 women participated, among them Thornley. Although

1 The Australian June 5 1974

Below: Martha Ansara during *Edie Coffey's My Survival as an Aboriginal*



1 Part 1 is this series appeared in Cinema Papers issue 9 June-July 1975 pp. 34-37 20 Part 2 issue 10 September/October 1975 pp. 126-141 145 Part 3 issue 12 April 1977 pp. 128-131

2 Reprinted in this issue

Attendance was not an entry requirement, many of those who took part in the course had worked in the women's movement. The workshop was run along collective lines, with everyone taking some of the responsibility for its organisation.

During the workshop Thornley made *Still Life* (together with Dasha Kozak), a short film about an artist's model posing for an all-male class.

"The Workshop was the first time I was actually involved in making films. Until then I had either been watching or sitting in them. The Workshop was my first opportunity to get my hands on filmmaking equipment. It was very exciting. Making films was so different from being the passive viewer."



48044 and **48045** photographs from Jan. 1964 of a heavy stream used in *Stellman*

Measures

After the Women's Film Workshop was concluded, Thornley decided to make her own film. "I wrote a script which I put up to the Australian Film Institute. It was called *Cup of Tea* and was about having an abortion in the mid-1950s when it was illegal. Basically, it was a dramatization. It explored the contrast between the respectability of housewifery and the reality of getting an abortion when it was illegal."

"The sameness of that contrast was really strong in my mind, but I couldn't fuse the two experiences together. That's why I wanted to make a film about it. I think it was quite a good script."

"In the end, however, I didn't make it. I couldn't come to terms with the idea of a very weak shoot—using actors and light, and all the other paraphernalia. Now that I have read and thought more, seem more firm, and wanted with more conviction, I think my rejection of the idea had to do with rejecting the form of narrative cinema. It's such a difficult area to work well in. You have to be very concerned."

Jane Thornley and her mother in *Film for Discussion*, produced by the Seattle Women's Film Group

To make a narrative film work, and I felt I didn't have this experience.

"It's all the narrative films I have worked on there has been an incredible disparity between the content of the film and the way they have been made. I couldn't come so terms with that. I also couldn't come to terms with having someone sit out my experiences, and I hadn't recovered there from me enough in the street for *Can of Tuna*.

"I knew I wanted to make a film, but I didn't want to make that film. So, one day I decided to look at all the films I had ever acted in or worked on, and after brooding over them decided to change the concept for my film. I then wrote to the AFI and advised them what I wanted to do, and they gave their okay."

While *Masters* was evolving, Thorley worked as a camera assistant, first for Joe Rhoder at Film Australia and then, on Ansett's recommendation, for Tom Cowan on *Journey Across Women*.

"From the idea to the execution, *Maiden* took three years. During that time I tried to enroll in the Film and Television School, but each year I was rejected. The outline of *Maiden* was one of the things I submitted in my last application.

"One of the reasons it was such a struggle to make was that I had to deal with my lack of confidence. I had taken the rejection from the School very badly. They said they wouldn't admit me because my work was not of a sufficiently high standard, and I began to believe it. Perhaps there was some truth in what they said."

"Demed sports is formal training. I was working without the skills and persona one develops when one has experience."

Window evolved into a portrait of four generations of Thornley's maternal family, exploring the period between 1900 and 1977, drawing on photographs found in family albums. It is an intensely personal film, and a comment on the development of all Australian families.

When the film premiered at the Sydney Film Festival in June 1978, film reviewer Paddy McLennan wrote:

"The General Category award was a quite mystifying. It was given to a film called *Maddies*, by Jon Thoreky, which was technically incompetent, boring and stupid. I can only imagine that its evangelistic lunaticism won it support from the clique of self-made fringe-dwellers in the women's movement!"

The General Section had been judged, in fact,

by filmmakers Sandra Gross and Phil Noyes, and *Filmnews* editor Tina Kaufman

Neyrot and Kaulraam replied to the McGowan review, describing it as "bureaucratic and offhand". Their letter didn't arrive in time for the following edition and was not published, but it said, in part:

"There is a world-wide body of life experience on which grows the technical aspects of images and responds to the exposure not motivated by the manipulation of these images. In these films, over-exposure, graininess, contrary lighting, or whatever, are sold to prospective buyers to be used by the new generation of filmmakers who, not bound by traditional Hollywood aesthetics, find themselves free to fashion a new cinematic vocabulary. Jane Thornley has done just this."

McGuinness had also questioned the authority of the Academy judges of the German Union Awards. Traditionally, the foreign delegates to the Festival, who judge the *Rosina Mammola Award*, choose a different film from their local counterparts (1979 being an exception). Fick of his concern with parochialism, however, more have been invalidated than *Madness* won a Gold Hugo at the Chicago Film Festival and was entered in the Flattery Seminar in the U.S.

Commenting on the Awards and McGinniss' reaction to the film, Thorndyke said:

"Fiona getting into the Venice de la Grande Suisse Australia was a kind of recognition of the optimism that had been made about the film and the Film School made about me. It was even more of a recognition when the Film School sent me a telegram of congratulations. "Freddo" review distributed me, but by the time it was published the film had been shown to lots of people and other reactions were strong more disturbing. When I was having the movie transferred, the sound technician — who was the first man to take to it — looked to though he had false alarm. I felt really mortified. "I suppose it's like having children. You can't control what people think or feel. The film is a free work."

Source: *Author's calculations*.

My Survival as an Aboriginal

My Survival as an Aboriginal

In 1976, Marthe Anzures enrolled in the full-time program of the Australian Film and Television School to study cinematography. During the three years she spent there, Anzures directed

4 The AFI was also administering the funding for the Australian Film Commission's Experimental Film Fund.

two films — *Don't Be Too Polite Girls* (about writing women), and *Secret Storm* (inspired by Jan Thornhill) — and shot several others, including *Letters From Poland* and *Me and Daphne* (directed by David Blair).

At the School, Ansara studied under cinematographer Brian Franks, of whom she said, "Everything I know I owe to him. You only really need one good person teaching you if you're learning a craft. You just have cups of tea with them and watch them in action. After a while it rubs off."

During her first year, Ansara, together with black activist Essie Coffey, applied to the APC for funds to make a documentary, *My Survival as an Aboriginal*. However, the production was postponed until Ansara had completed her course at the School.

"While I was aware of being different from the other people working on the film, while we were up in Brisbane I met Essie. She was very nice to me, there were certain ways in which I was very different from the film crew that were acceptable to her."

"We had a lot of a talk about this and that and spread out certain political questions. I found out a bit from her. When it was time to go I said, 'Well make our own film, one that will say all the things that had to be left out of *Backroads*'."

"You know how you say these things, and the next week you've forgotten them? Well, I didn't forget, and one day I just got on the train to Dubbo and then on the bus to Brewarrina — and there was Essie on the bus! And as we discussed what the film should be about, I thought we should make a drama — just as ending as Noyce's *Backroads* but she said no. She wanted everything in the film to be truthful, not play scenes."

My Survival was an Aboriginal film directed by Coffey and photographed by Ansara, it won the documentary section of the 1978 Greater Union Awards and the Rosslyn Macdonald Award.

Coffey could not attend the Festival to accept the award, so Ansara, who had just published an article in *Woman* detailing the history of the Greater Union Awards (which criticized them for not exhibiting the winning films in their venues, and for not increasing the prize money to line with inflation), collected them on her behalf. She used her acceptance speech to remind the audience that poor education and government indifference were still destroying the Aboriginals.

My Survival was initially funded with \$16,500 from the Creative Development Branch of the APC.

"We were very economical, everybody had to eat porridge. We had the money to make a 26-minute film, but I could tell it was going to be a bit longer. So we went carefully with money, and for only \$1530 more we got a 56-minute film — and an impressive total I think we did very well."

Essie Coffey learned during the shooting of *My Survival* as an Aboriginal.



Also, Margaret A. Robins Campbell — Old Father Time

"One thing that has always been important to me is making films that really speak from inside a situation. Just about the best experience I've ever had was working for the Australian Action Group on Pitcairns (winner of the documentary section of the 1977 Greater Union Awards). It was very interesting because Tony Greiss, who produced the film and also appeared in it, knew so clearly what he wanted to say."

"To make a film, you have to remain naive. If you make a film with somebody like Essie or Tony Greiss — who hadn't made a film before — you have to do exactly as they say and not know better. Their weakness, which is ignorance about how film works, is also their strength. If you want to try to control that, you lose their strength."

As well as making films and distributing them, writing and looking after two children, Ansara also works, from time to time, as an assessor for the Creative Development Branch of the APC.

"One of the things that has been important to me — far more to me than I can say — is that I want to see film obviously only for many years before I ever thought about making one."

"It's extraordinary to me that so many of the people who come to the APC for money to make films have hardly ever seen one. They might have seen certain films down here, but beyond that there has been a little exploration, and so little thought."

"We have the problems, among filmmakers and film journalists in this country, of an extremely underdeveloped film culture. Films are made in a vacuum and divorced in a manner. There is very little concrete purpose, or common sense of the function of film in this society. Documentaries of film are without any goals or problems."

Filmmakers who work in the industry are often cynical or exhausted, and they work on an alienated way. This is a severe problem, and this is why many of the films are virtually useless. They can be promoted easily, people will watch them, and somebody may make money out of them, but beyond that very few of them seem to be lasting."

When this interview was conducted, Ansara was about to leave Australia for Cuba and the U.S. to arrange distribution for her own and other related films. *My Survival* as an Aboriginal has been invited to the San Francisco Film Festival, and she will meet Coffey there for the screening.

When Ansara returns, she hopes to make a

film on Vietnam with independent filmmaker Richard Mardoun. She also hopes to study with cameraman Ross Wood, for which she received a research fellowship from the Women's Film Fund several months ago.

Thorley is working on a compilation documentary about women and work in Australia, with Margaret Oliver and Megan McCarthy. The research is being funded by the Creative Development Branch.

"Since Mardoun, I have developed more insights about what films can be used for. I didn't make *Maidens* to be used for anything. It's just as well I worked that out with Mardoun and not some other kind of film. But it had to be made. It was a process of transformation within myself. I know it is limited so far as distribution is concerned, because I don't think it's accessible to a wide audience."

"The women and work film is one that I needed. The only Australian film on the subject is *Don't Be Too Polite Girls*, but there is no labor history film. We want to explore the labor history of working women in Australia, and the image of women in Australian films."

"By January we hope to have the equivalent of a shooting script. All the copyright questions worked out, the sound materials completed, and we will have assembled most of the footage and the film is going to be."

"This film could have been made five or 10 years ago, because we are drawing on research by feminist historians like Anne Summers, Sue Jeffery and Margaret Powell — work that had come out of the women's movement and wasn't around before."

Ansara is one of the few women filmmakers working in the Australian film industry, and she has very strong views on the roles women should fill in the industry, and how they should achieve them.

"I can remember when I was 19 and I used to tug along and carry things like people were making me. I don't know when I was 19, but somebody very special who photographed films. It was hard for me to realize that Alfred Hitchcock didn't photograph his films, that he had somebody make them up in his head's eye without physically having to do it. I always have to do things with my own hands."

"Being able to photograph films has very little to do with technical considerations and a lot to do with mental attitudes and experience. I just wish more women knew this and then they wouldn't be so intimidated by machines."

"I find it disturbing that most women don't want to work in technical areas. I don't see how we can do as well as men in the film industry unless they do. However, I don't think there are the barriers now that there used to be. People like Jan Kenny have opened the way for women to do technical work."

"I think women are discouraged by their own restrictions. They are still sensitive about working in the film industry. They don't do it with their hands and eyes, they do it from a safe distance, and for me directing is a safe distance."

"Part of my reason for saying this is that I respect the notion of a single person, the director, being the creative force behind a film. There is an inhibition for directors in this society that I don't share. I would like to see film where a great deal of participation and dialogue and negotiation from all those involved go into their making."

"I am not sure I wish to direct film, but I like to photograph them. I also want to take responsibility for films. For me, the making of the film is the making of it. I can't give that up so rapidly also." ■



CURRENTS IN JAPAN



Top left: *Tokyo* (1950) featuring Eiko Matsuda and Yūzō Kiyama. Top, on the set of *Empire of the Sun*.

Bottom left: *Empire of the Sun*, which won a Cannes prize for the boy, director of the 1954 Cannes Film Festival.

Bottom right: *Empire of the Sun*. The film's production was aided by the Japanese government to support America's war effort.

PANESE CINEMA

NAGISA OSHIMA

Do you think the obscenity charges against you and the outcome of the trial you are now involved in will affect your work?

I don't think it will have much influence.

Why were the charges brought against you? With such a long tradition of pornography in Japan the official attitude seems very inconsistent . . .

I think so, too, it is absolutely inconsistent. As for the police, they have no objective basis on which to decide what is obscene and what is not. When they occasionally set up someone as a criminal, they just make a suspicious or example of him; they think others will not follow suit. In some way or other they want to suppress our freedom of expression. So they hit someone in the public eye, like the recent modest involving the writer, Akio Yuki Nishida, and now the filmmaker Oshima.

When it came into the country, *Empire of the Senses* had already been not by the content, so they couldn't make the film itself their target. Therefore, they hit the book of the film, and are using that as a basis to arrest. That is the way power works. Of course it is contradictory.

Do you think the situation will get worse in Japan?

It is bad enough as it is. I don't think it can get much worse.

In your films, you often deal with characters who have been defined as criminals or outsiders by society. Is this because the conflict between society and the individual can be seen more sharply through them? Or are you more concerned with the definition arrived at by a society or government of what social or criminal behavior is, and what creates a criminal?

I am very interested in the criminal as such. As for the criminal versus society, of course I am very interested in that. But I am more interested in the criminal for his own sake than in the conflict between the two. Ultimately it is the suffering human being that concerns me. And the criminal is some-

Nagisa Oshima's first film, "A Town of Love and Hope", was made in 1959, but it wasn't until "Boy" was screened at the Venice Film Festival, in 1963, that he attracted attention outside Japan.

The enthusiastic critical reaction the film received led to the commercial release of "Death by Hanging" (1968) and "Diary of a Shinjuku Thief" (1969) in London. Since then his films have been shown at major international film festivals, and many have been released commercially in a number of countries. Oshima's work has been extensively reviewed, and he has been universally acclaimed as one of the most talented directors in Japan today.

Oshima's career, however, has been surrounded by controversy. In 1940, his fourth feature, "Night and Fog over Japan", about the activities of a group of militant students, was withdrawn from circulation and suppressed. More recently, "Empire of the Senses" (1976) has been banned in many countries because of its sexual explicitness. Oshima is also involved in a protracted legal battle involving obscenity charges arising from the publication of an illustrated book of "Empire of the Senses".

His latest film, "Empire of Passion", premiered at the 1978 Cannes Film Festival where it won the award for best direction. It was shown, for the first time in Australia, at this year's Melbourne and Sydney Film Festivals.

Oshima was interviewed in Tokyo recently for *Cinema Papers* by independent filmmakers and journalist Salun Hoens. He talks about the obscenity charges against him, and the position of women in contemporary Japan.

one who experiences life as suffering more than just a want to portray such people.

Do you think the reaction to your film abroad is different from that in Japan?

I think it is the same. In Venice more with the individual than with the society. In the case of The Ceremony, for instance, if you take the street-level view of it, there reaction is so difficult to comprehend: not even I can understand it.

When I saw "Empire of the Senses" at the Sydney Film Festival — where it was very popular — several people who liked it said they thought it was beautiful, but not erotic . . .

Not erotic? I can see that.

Was that your intention?

Yes.

Do you see a connection between your approach and the "shock" soundtracks, or indifferent Japanese theatre?

There is a connection, but it is not something I was conscious of. It just came out that way in the process.

I understood "Empire of the Senses" was particularly popular among women in Japan. Did you expect that?

Yes. I thought it would have a large following among women.

You once did a television program.

over a period of time, in which you spoke to women about their problems — sexual, marital and so on — and gave them advice. Did this affect the making of the film?

Yes, it was related. Let me put it this way: my films have usually portrayed men and the women around them, the person concerning the crime might be a young boy or a youth. The typical crime, in the case of the youth, was rape. In such cases the women would not be the perpetrator of the crime, but only the object of it. From a certain point, with film like *Empire of the Senses* and *Empire of Passion*, I began to do the opposite, to make women the central characters. The focus of my interest shifted in this way towards women, and I think the television program where I talked with women had something to do with this.

Empire of the Senses has gained in popularity in Japan in the past couple of years, perhaps partly because it is something that has come from the outside and become fashionable. Do you have any opinion as to what is making it so trendy?

Yes. I feel I want to stand alongside and fight with the women who are putting up a serious struggle. But among all the various currents, there are those that have come from overseas and just become fashionable.

Recently, what was called the women's life movement, when it began was very good. In Japan it was at its best and was most vigorous as a movement just before International Women's Year, in 1975. After that, it was in the opposite direction and while taking on a liberal inside, a become reactionary.

The old women's movement in Japan went hand in hand with class struggle and socialism for a long time. With the women's life movement it became clear for the first time that the struggle had to deal with basic issues peculiar to women. I would support this.

But we must have something called feminism. Thus, I think, is linked by a group of elite women who are asserting their rights while embracing a male society. I don't think that's the case with all feminists.

Continued on P. 579

CURRENTS IN JAPAN



Top left: Service members in a military medical unit
in The Far West

Top right: The Far West. Soldiers engaged in a
game with one of the military workers

Bottom: Service members in The Far West

PAN-SE CINEMA

SACHIKO HIDARI

As an actress, I don't like a scene cut, and therefore, as a director, I often use very long takes. When I stop a scene I feel as if my heart is cut short and the flow of human emotion has stopped.

I have worked with many directors, and each has his own way of drawing out an actor. The one who impressed me most was Fumio Uchida. He would direct according to the needs of each actor.

Working with him on the other hand meant going to all-weather tests. She and he was difficult to make for that reason. But the experience was useful in the making of *The Far Road*, because the men members and workers in the film were precisely all outdoors. The scene of discussion for instance—particularly the meeting of the workers' wives—were all shot using amateurs.

When you was professional actors and actresses you get a discrepancy in acting styles. To avoid this infirmity effect, one has to try and get the amateurs to portray their own lives without being conscious of it.

"The Far Road" focuses on a worker's wife, Satsuko. This is unusual for a union film. . . .

The average woman, as portrayed in the media, is of a rather passive kind, she doesn't act out to change things around her. I had little affinity with such women.

Once, by chance, I found myself chatting with a group of railway workers' wives I had met on a train. They told me that unless they took part time jobs they couldn't make a living.

Regardless of whether they liked it or not, they had to work to supplement their husbands' incomes. They were very dissatisfied and felt they had to do something. They wanted to support their husbands when they went on strike for better wages.

What they told me affected me greatly, and later I spoke to women in factories, offices, and other work places. Then, gradually, I began to develop a story. I discussed it with union officials and suggested it would make a film.

Sachiko Hidari is the only woman to direct a commercial feature film in Japan (*"The Far Road"*—1977), since the death of actress Kinuyo Tanaka, who, between 1954 and 1962, directed six films.

"The Far Road" was seen for the first time in Australia last year, at a travelling festival of Japanese films sponsored by the Australia-Japan Foundation, and again this year at screenings organized by the National Film Theatre of Australia. Overseas, the film has been screened at the Berlin Festival and in the New Directors' series at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Hidari not only directed and starred in *"The Far Road"*, but also produced it, with finance raised from the Japanese National Railway Workers' Union. It is based on her original idea and scripted by the well-known Japanese writer, Ken Miyamoto.

Sachiko Hidari, like Kinuyo Tanaka, turned to directing after a long career as an actress, and has worked with some of Japan's leading directors. Her films give a vivid, although varied picture of the post-war Japanese woman, with emphasis on strength of will, independence, perseverance and earthiness. Hidari's two finest performances were in Shôhei Imamura's *"The Insect Woman"* (1963), and Susumu Hani's *"She and He"* (1963), which won her the best actress award at the Berlin Film Festival.

In this interview, conducted by Solman House, Hidari discusses her career as an actress, and the making of *"The Far Road"*. She begins by describing how her acting experience affected her approach to directing.

Essentially, *The Far Road* is a plea for a better life for railway workers, and for all other people in government-managed institutions. These are nationalized industries that continue to operate as if they were not nationalized. Why should a worker be getting a pension after 30 years on the job?

The lives of ordinary working families are not portrayed in Japanese films very often, and the image of the working man is very weak.

Did the film change much in the making?

There is a lot in the film that's

3 The far road is more radical politically than most in cinema is a new Japanese sentence. This is evident in the worker's protest movement of his right to strike (something which has been denied not only to many workers) and is a threat to the Japanese government's control of management unions which exploit the worker's sense of loyalty to his particular company over his allegiance to his fellow workers.

not in the script. In the theatre it could work to have the actors speak the lines as written, but I felt it wouldn't work with young actors who had no experience of the workers' lives. So I told them to go to the railway workers and talk to them, make up their dialogue, and ask themselves questions like, "Why does father work for such low wages?", or "Why should I follow in his footsteps and become a railway worker?"

You remember that long sentence where the boy is talking to his mother about his future as they walk along the state?

Yes, I liked that scene very much. . . .

The boy made up those lines himself.

I liked the pace. You allowed it to run its course. . . .

Yes. There is no cut at the scene. I told the cameraman to keep

shooting, at least until the boy had stopped talking. I was surprised that it came off in one take. Rather than me (as the mother) telling the son, "You should study hard, then go to university," and so on, I wanted the mother to listen in what her son had to say and hear what he wanted to do. Therefore, I had the boy who plays the son make it up himself.

Each time we ran through the scene it was different, but the basic content was the same. The son realized he had to choose his own course, and then, by his own choice, decided on the railway job. Here was something in his father's way of living that had moved him.

Japan has become a country where parents worried about their children's future, do everything to get them into an elite course. They totally despised the children's individual qualities and think only of their progress from kindergarten through to university. This is horrendous, it was very much in mind while I was making the film.

The character you play in *"The Far Road"* is a very idealistic. . . .

There are a lot of women like that in Japan: women who live a simple life and learn to cope with hardship when their husbands are sacked or refuse to go to work. There is nothing very dramatic about such people.

Women have great perseverance—not just in Japan, but all over the world. They have an ability to put up with things that men don't.

Do you use this as a good thing?

No, I don't think one can say that. If the situation were bad and themselves in makes no sense. They must also have the intelligence to change it. Up until now perseverance has been made into a virtue that men have and were women refuse to be bound by tradition. They break their lives for themselves. There are such women in Japan, too, but in a society influenced by the media people tend to become passive.

The role I played in *The Far Road* is a combination of many women I have met. I created the character from the positive traits I found in them.

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1 The son of Kenji Miyamoto's *The Little Clouds*.

2 Hidari's husband and 1977.



I am part of the second generation of Swiss filmmakers — after Alan Tanner, Michel Sautter and Claude Goretta. Though I started making films at the same time, I followed a different course. I have more affinity with German-Swiss cinema than with French-Swiss cinema. The difference between the two cinema is that while the French-Swiss came out of television, the German-Swiss developed in documentaries.

The documentary school in German Switzerland is rather developed. It is a natural inclination in Swiss society, and has developed a rapport with the people. The subjects of these films are planted in the social and political problematic.

The French-Swiss cinema, as the other hand, has followed the same route into fiction, but by using the same cinema available for documentaries: direct sound, 16mm camera, non-professional actors, natural light, etc. These techniques have allowed the development of cinema in a country that has no structure for it.

Do you mean structure in financial terms?

Yes. Influential structure: Studios and technicians, etc., don't exist other than for television. This has had a direct effect on the kinds of cinema that have developed. The financial and technical constraints gave us intimate form to the films. They expressed themselves through the quietest word with very few characters — one thinks of films like *Bertrud von Ellendörfer's* *Enfer* *Maur*, or the films of Tanner and Sautter.

The form of these films was also influenced by their being shot in farms, in black and white and with few actors. Many scenes would often take place in one room and, because of budgetary limitations, there was rarely any shooting in the countryside.

This is not a value judgment on the films: it is an attempt to characterize them. Today, however, there is a generation of Swiss filmmakers who are moving to this form, who want to open out their cinema. The last films of Tanner and Sautter are examples of this — *Messidor* and so on. This cinema also uses a more poetic language, with humor and dialogue that doesn't deal directly with the social and political context of the film — that is to say, which isn't formulated by it.

YVES YERSIN

The Cannes Film Festival consists of several different events, and while the officially-tered films in the Competition gain most of the coverage in the popular press, often it is the films in the other events that generate the greatest critical response. One such film in 1979 was Yves Yersin's "Les petites figures", which screened in the Un Certain Regard section. A moderately-budgeted Swiss feature, it tells the story of how the life of Pipa, a 66 year-old farm-hand, is transformed after he buys a motor-cycle.

While in Cannes for the screening of his film, Yersin was interviewed by Scott Murray. Yersin begins by discussing his place in Swiss cinema today.



"Les petites figures" took three years to make. Was this a reflection of the difficulty of your moving from documentaries into features?

It is true that the generation of Les petites figures was very slow, but the problem was a different one. The need to get away from documentaries is something felt in the documentaries; they are quite theoretical. A more important problem is the financial side. Les petites figures cost 1,600,000 Swiss francs (A\$848,300), which is quite expensive.

However, the slow generation also grew from my method of work. I work in a very artisanal way, and two film collectors were used in making the film. This allowed the film to be made on a very autonomous way.

Did these collectors financially support the film?

No. Collectors don't subsidize films. They just gather together the technical side — the technicians and so on. They also have sound studios, and making and mixing facilities. The filmmaker is the one who actually pushes his project forward. The state doesn't subsidize the collection; it subsidizes the film.

The main collectors are Filmkollektive in Zurich, Göttingen Switzerland, and Film et Video Collectif in Lausanne, French Switzerland.

Before going to the collectors, I tried to get the film started through the collective approach of finding an established producer. This took a year, and came to nothing. And, during that time, the technicians started to bring together all their technical means, and to possess the tools with which they work. Finally, Robert Benin, who is a member of the collective in Lausanne, became the producer. He is now a professional producer. He started with other films in the collective, like Patricia Morin's *The Indian Ace* *Self For Aways*.

Government subsidy is obviously essential to continued film production in Switzerland. What is the present level of funding, and is it likely to continue?

It is essential if films are to be made in Switzerland. At the moment 2,750,000 Swiss francs (A\$1,455,075) is made available for film production and culture — that is, for absolutely everything in do with film culture.



Dora de Bass, Michel Ruhl and Félix Lemaire
interview in *Les petites figures*

Does the state expect to recoup the money it invests in films?

There are moving in that direction, but financial gain is not yet a criterion in deciding what films are to be made.

How much did the state invest in "*Les petites figures*"?

In just a 300,000 Swiss francs, which is about one-fifth of the budget. Equally important, however, is the financial involvement of Swiss television. It is practically impossible to make films of the nature of *Les petites figures* without a co-production arrangement.

"*Les petites figures*" also had the involvement of French television...

Yes. There are three unusual things for Swiss film government subsidy, co-production with Swiss television, and co-production with a foreign country. The audience in Switzerland is so small that it is impossible to cover costs in Switzerland alone.

I understand the story in the film is based on a true incident...

Yes, it is about an agricultural worker whose life was completely transformed when he started to travel in his old age. He bought a motor-bike with the money he received from the pension fund. But he was caught drunk, and the motor-bike was taken by the police. The film is the consequence of an almost miracle.

Claude Muret [co-writer] and I decided to use this incident to describe not only the life of an old farm-hand, but also to make some kind of fable. We kept the main events and the setting, and added to it a narrative.

The various stages of development of the main character represent the symbolic stages which correspond to our own reality: the discovery of geographical autonomy, the power over oneself and others, the implication of the body in an experience, a sense of escape, the flight to somewhere else,



Michel Ruhl as Pipe shown in *Les petites figures*

erstasy. Katsuragi. Then the experience that shocks you into a state of complete destruction and the impossibility of continuing on the road to detachment. Finally, slow reconstruction by means of reflection, by the discovery of others and your place among them, and the power and potentiality of freedom.

I am interested in your use of the motor-cycle as a catalyst, because while it does help Pipe progress towards autonomy, a motor-cycle is also a negative product of reflection: it is noisy, polluting, causes the landscape to be looked up with revulsion and so on...

The manna offered by modern technology has that effect only because one is the master as well as possessor of it. Everything depends on the way things are used. In the case of Pipe, instead of being prisoner of the motor-bike, he is prepared to conquer it himself. His liberation as the film is due to his ability being there, and the motor-bike provides him with a way of attaining liberty.

The scene where Pipe flies on the motor-cycle is the only time the film moves into fantasy. Was part of the motivation of the scene to divorce the film that little bit from reality, thereby strengthening your desire not to talk about political things directly?

Yes. The scene is a way of helping to avoid imposing ideas on the public which are already formulated. It is an attempt to reach the public in a deeper way, through other means.

One should always try to tell the public things that allow it two different ways of perceiving them. So while one can see Pipe as simply flying, one can also look at with

one's personal and deeper aspirations.

In this dealing with characters, rather than ideas, indicative of something wider than just a reaction to the earlier film of Gorris and Tanner?

Yes. It is an evolution that followed the movement of *Les... a re-definition of what is "realistic". This redefinition of the technique is something that comes constantly from the individual. One cannot impose a transformation on society in general; it is a transformation of the individual that one must attain.*

Power is gained and because Pipe questions himself, and through his questions creates the audience to see the same processes of self-questioning.

Yet Pipe doesn't try to communicate this process to his boss, Baccara at all, he stays unnecessarily silent...

Correct. Pipe only expresses what he is trying to do, the crucial communication is to his boss because he would not understand.

Up to this point the boss has had the responsibility of everything, the fact is — at least, it's been his responsibility. But from the moment a person takes responsibility for himself, the power of the boss is lessened. It is therefore something that one is forced to impose; one cannot do it through discussion. So, while the boss finally does give responsibility to the others, they have in fact already taken what responsibility themselves.

The film stops at the point where self-responsibility has formed on each of the characters in different ways. It is optimistic in one sense, but it doesn't go further...

From the moment one attains autonomy, anxiety begins. Liberty is not necessarily happiness. Rather, it signals that immense

work is about to start. That is why I wanted to finish the film at this point.

The scene where Pipe flies around the Matterhorn in a helicopter confirms one, or that he seems to prefer the photograph in his room to the reality. This seems to go against his path to liberty...

The film is built on two general movements: the first is called Katsuragi, which is about the search for liberty, total and abstract, and the second shows the limits of this way of attaining liberty, and how, ultimately, Pipe goes further than that.

People who only go through the first movement often find themselves back in slavery in the state they were before. This can be in total self-destruction, through injecting drugs or by becoming marginal. I wanted to show how society reacts to the act of liberty that Pipe is conquering.

Liberty goes further than Pipe at the moment only, he is not in control of it. And it is usually at the moment that society represses that liberty.

In the second movement, the film shows how Pipe defines himself in society by redefining his surroundings, his company and his rapport with himself, with others, and with his work. He discovers that there are two forms of work — what he does for others, and what he does for himself. In the scene of the Matterhorn, Pipe realizes that the Katsuragi movement is not a freedom for him. The mode of progression was valid at the beginning, but now it is no longer sufficient. And the only way to advance further is to do so back at the farm.

That is why he says, "I have to go back to the ground because I have things to do..."

Yes. Pipe realizes that the Matterhorn is for him, a dream, and only approachable by means that he cannot control, such as a helicopter. So the photograph in his room is much more important to him than the Matterhorn. It is all his factory, while the reality of the Matterhorn is something he cannot do anything with. ■

Filmography

Bibliography	
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AUSTRALIAN TELEVISION

Why it is the way it is

Jalic James Bailey

The history of Australian television must inevitably be that of government policy and legislation. There are two reasons for this:

- (a) Broadcasting was limited in space and, therefore, provided for competition, and
- (b) It reaches every inhabitant of the public who can turn on a receiving set, thereby requiring close control.

This history, therefore, is one of government action and reaction to the various vested interests involved in broadcasting.

In the early days of radio, when the system was being established, these interests were manufacturers and retailers, broadcasting companies and the public. The treatment and balance of these pressure groups on the government of the day resulted in the dual system of national broadcasting — the Australian Broadcasting Commission and the commercial system — which exists today.¹

The three factors which determined the structure of television were the existing dual system of commercial and ABC radio, the federal election of December 1949, and the economic crisis in 1951-52.

Dual System Established

Radio moved out of the experimental stage in 1921, and the first regulations introduced by the Post Office were for a system of sealed sets. They were the forerunner of Ernest Fisk, managing director of AWA, which was one of the leading manufacturers. Through the Post Office, licensees paid license fees to maintain the broadcasting stations they wished to receive, and these sets were used to receive that channel only. Initially, no direct commercial advertising was allowed. It soon became obvious, however, that there were not enough listeners' licenses to generate sufficient revenue to support the broadcasting system. So the Postmaster-General allowed sponsorship arrangements. At the same time, the Sydney Sun bought into the radio station 2BL, and that was the beginning of newspaper involvement in the ownership of broadcasting.

The sealed set system was unpopular with three of the four companies licensed to broadcast, the radio set retailers and the public, and all persuaded the Postmaster-General for an alternative system. So, in 1926, the "A" and

"B" class license system was introduced. "A" class licenses were operated by broadcasting companies funded from the revenue from listeners' licenses, while "B" class licenses were operated by the broadcasting companies which were allowed to advertise.

Neither the "A" or "B" class licensing system succeeded in getting radio to the country areas, however, in both methods of financing depended on broadcasting to areas with large populations. As a result of public demand the Royal Commission on Wireless was appointed in 1927. It heard considerable evidence in favor of the BBC system, but did not recommend that system because of the difficulty of compensating the existing companies.² Instead, the Government tried to get the "A" class companies to pool their resources to set up relay stations and make greater use of interstate relays, but the prole nature of the individual companies negated against this compromise.

Finally, in 1929, the Government decided to acquire the plant and equipment of all the "A" class stations. It paid \$64,261 10/6 in compensation and put the supply of programs to these stations up for tender. The Australian Broadcasting Company, a consortium of six interests (three of the victrolas already broadcasting were involved), won the contract for three years, with a promise to meet the demands of various public pressure groups interested in television, radio and the arts.

Throughout 1930 and 1931 the pressure from public groups continued; many of them believed that only a public corporation could provide a high standard of programming on a national basis. The Government was prepared to introduce such a structure when the Australian Broadcasting Company license expired in 1932 and the Australian Broadcasting Commission Act was passed. This set up the ABC along the line similar to those which exist today.

The new ABC had problems in the first decade of its existence with new broadcast publications and relations with the Government. Over the same period the commercial broadcasters were having problems with the Post Office in relation to regulations, and those difficulties eventually led to the setting up of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Broadcasting, which produced its Report in 1942.³ This became known as the Gibson Committee after its chairman.

That was the only public inquiry to look at the total operation of the ABC, and since then was again examining the method of control through the general manager and the commercial interests.

The Report recommended, among other things, the administration of commercial radio by legislation and an end to its direct control by the Post Office.⁴ The Government concurred, and so the existing legislation, which controlled the ABC, added these recommendations. This new Act became the statutory basis of the Broadcasting and Television Act as it exists today.

Early Television Policy

The 1942 Act, of course, made no reference to television, its history begins with legislation passed six years later, in 1948. This Act set up the Australian Broadcasting Control Board (the forerunner of the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal) and excluded commercial television.⁵

The government of the day was eager to set up a national service in the six capital cities which would cover 60 percent of the population. It also wanted to co-ordinate and control the technical side of all broadcasting, including television, and the programming and advertising side of commercial radio. The debate in parliament focused on the issue of control, rather than the play and view of commercial television.⁶

The Australian Federation of Commercial Broadcasters (the forerunner to the Federation of Australian Radio Broadcasters) had, as early as 1936, considered the advantages of a separate board to present drafts of the program, the Federation was unhappy about the way the Post Office had been regulating commercial stations and allocating channels. However, the Federation feared that a government authority would interfere in programming, particularly if the body was set up by a Labor government. The National Opposition also strongly opposed the concept of a board, claiming that it would be "the first step towards nationalization".

The Control Board was set up in March 1948 with three permanent Board members and a staff recruited from the Post Office. The Labor government regarded the Board as a champion of the interests of the licensees, and the Board recognized that as responsibility in this area "represents a novel development in the administration of broadcasting".

Within months of the Board's inception it ventured into the programming role and issued its first order (Political Order No. 1) which defined the terms of availability of airtime for political broadcasts, and required commercial stations to transmit any addresses by party

1. As every government since 1942 has failed to question the structure, performance and role of the ABC in the broadcasting system, this analysis has not attempted to plot the steps of the ABC which has made very little impact on broadcasting since its creation in 1932.

2. Curran, *The Administrative History of the Development of Wireless Telegraphy and Broadcasting* (1947) IMA Radio Society Library, 1948.

3. Australian Parliament, *Report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Broadcasting*.

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5. Ibid.

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7. Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates* 1948.

8. Australian Broadcasting Control Board, *Annual Report*, 1951.

standards which had been broadcast by the ABC in the 1946 elections the ABC had given a 15-minute segment to the Communist Party, but by 1949 the Cold War had begun and a "Reds under the bed" clause was inserted in both sides of parliament. The Communist threat revived the order, which was destined for revocation by parliament anyway, and it never again made an independent move in the programming area.

The 1949 Election

The Labor government called for tenders for the supply of television transmitters and studio equipment for a national service in each capital city, but before work began the Liberal Party gained power and Robert Menzies became Prime Minister.

The new Government announced as detailed policy on television in June 1950.¹¹ It stated that television would develop gradually, with one station in Sydney for the National Television Service, which would expand as funds became available. There were also to be two commercial television stations — one in Sydney and one in Melbourne — with others available to applicants in any of the other capital cities who showed they had the financial capacity to sustain a service.

This policy statement had serious implications for the ABC. For long being given a monopolistic control of television, which was a possibility under the Labor government's policy, it was fighting for the junior role in the development of television. Moreover, it was left uncertain of the future plans of the Government which effectively supported private enterprise and had many members who were not fans of the ABC. Charles Menzies, general manager of the ABC at the time, said many years later¹² that he had suggested to Menzies that a national service and commercial service should come under one statutory authority, like the ABC. This way, the powerful medium could be operated in the public interest. He admitted, however, that Menzies was never in favor of the idea.

In August 1950, the Government set up a television advisory commission, consisting of the Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs, the chairman of the ABC and the chairman of the Australian Broadcasting Control Board. Charles Menzies went over to see a last-feeding mission for this Committee. He remembered "he was concerned to prevent that the same mistakes which had been made in radio — particularly the separation of responsibility between programming which was done by the ABC and the



Complete 1950 film set from both the film along in Sydney State Up

provision of technical facilities which were supplied by the Post Office. Because of the cost of setting up a national television service, Menzies wanted a system introduced which would encourage the Australian public to buy television sets. He had been very impressed with what he had found in San Francisco where stations showed that an increasing number of television sets were bought in even shanties, and that the cost of a national service might be outweighed for the Australian economy to sustain. He proposed, therefore, that there should be advertising on the ABC to 30 to 25 per cent of its programs.

The Economic Crisis of 1952

By early 1952 the economic straitened had become serious, and in March the Government announced that it had delayed the introduction of television and the economy improved.¹³ The future of television was again problematic, but early in 1955 the Government announced it would amend the broadcasting legislation to permit the licensing of commercial television stations "on the same fundamental basis as has been so remarkably successful in respect of sound broadcasting."¹⁴ It also appointed a Royal



Lady for a Day — day-time viewing at its best

Commission on Television, chaired by Professor G. W. Pease, vice-chancellor of Melbourne University, and including the chairman of the Central Board, to determine how many television stations there should be, and where they should be located.

The Opposition was very critical of the Government introducing legislation to provide for commercial television before the Royal Commission had reported, and for not allowing the Commission to provide a basic philosophy for the introduction of television, or even to decide whether commercial television was wanted.

Number of Channels

The Royal Commission took evidence from a number of witnesses who felt that a television service should be operated solely by a government authority, and that commercial services should not be permitted to operate at all — as, characteristically, that the latter should only be permitted to operate after the national service had been established for some years.

In a personal admission, Richard Beyer, the chairman of the ABC, revealed the real problem inherent in a commercial television system.

"It is against the question of the limitation of total television transmission that the real issue is joined in the negative spirit of commercial and public operation of television. In public operation there is no inherent urge to select more hours or more seasons than the availability of material of quality and public interest will permit. Commercially there is a natural urge to fill all possible hours with material of some sort for time is the product sold. This inevitably leads to the inclusion of a vast amount of material which is of inferior and sometimes distinctly harmful character. When we consider the low production and care devoted to the production of film for theatre use because of the possibility of advertising into thousands of individual addresses over a long period of time, it is obvious that the filling of day-long television programs on a multiplicity of stations must result in a lowering of quality."

Beyer then recommended a gradual introduction, stating that it was undesirable to introduce any wholesale amount, be it commercial, pub-

9. ABC Annual Report 1950.

10. Interview with Sir Charles Maitland for Australian Film and Television School, June 17, 1978.

11. Ibid.



Flirting in episode of Paula Felt's The Go-Between

12. ABC Annual Report 1952.

13. ABC Annual Report 1951.



Host Graham Kennedy (center) stands among the celebrities on the Melbourne Tonight + 1950 film. A. Wright (left) is seen in the group at left.



Lee (standing) of RTRV's The Happy Show

tical, or religious, which may have to be restricted in the future. He urged in favor of the Post Office screening committees which it would continue to run, to carry sponsored programs and printing facilities to those conservative organizations which wished to take advantage of them. He continued:

"The many applicants, both [sic] commercial, cultural and religious who may now or in the future desire participation on a commercial basis in television, should not have their rights prejudiced by the present elimination of any frequency to any one or more particular interests. Where competition cannot by its nature be completely free and unfettered due regard to community rights can be achieved only through the sharing of the community facility."¹⁶

The Royal Commission, however, stated that its terms of reference had restricted its function to inquire only into conditions under which the existing dual system should operate, and stated: "Although the question whether commercial television should be permitted in Australia is clearly a matter which has caused great concern to large sections of the community, we have come to the conclusion that it is not warranted in the matters referred to us, and we do not therefore propose to offer any observations in this area."¹⁷

In 1954 the Royal Commission recommended one national station and two commercial licenses in Sydney and Melbourne, forcing the evidence from the commercial radio broadcasters, newspaper proprietors and manufacturers which went to encourage the purchase of television sets.

Television Licences

The next significant event was the choosing of the licensees. The Control Board conducted public hearings into the granting of licenses in 1955. Four applications were received for the two Melbourne licenses, and eight for the two in Sydney. At the public hearings the Control Board approved representation by counsel. The

Control Board also gave permission to the New South Wales branch of the Retained Servicemen's League, and Action and Amusement Equity to be heard as interested parties, and Equity made a strong plea for an Australian content quota.

The Control Board reported to the Minister¹⁸ noting that the applicants came from a narrow area of press, broadcasting and theatre interests, and recommended that the four licenses be given to the applicants with substantial press and broadcasting interests. It is interesting that they did not recommend an additional Sydney application with an press interest. The Minister approved the Control Board's recommendations in April 1955, and all four commercial stations and the two ABC stations were on the air by January 1957.

In 1957 the Government announced the extension of the ABC and commercial television services to the other four capital cities.¹⁹ It also stated that it had made no decision on the number of commercial licenses to be granted in each capital city, and would not do so until the Control Board had made recommendations based on further public hearings.

In the Control Board's Report²⁰ on the Brisbane and Adelaide hearings it noted that much of the evidence was devoted to the interest and development of the existing system in Sydney and Melbourne, and that GTV's evidence indicated the station should be allowed to develop television in country areas through the establishment of relay stations.

So the Control Board addressed itself particularly to two issues: whether the existing licenses in Sydney and Melbourne should be allowed to exercise substantial influence in the establishment of the new stations in Brisbane and Adelaide; and to what extent newspapers, which already had interests in television broadcasting stations in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide, should be allowed to exercise

control over television stations in Brisbane and Adelaide, if licenses were granted to them.

The Control Board answered both questions negatively. It recommended that there should be only one licensee issued in either city and indicated that a locally-owned company, not controlled in any way by companies already holding licenses, would be preferred.

The Government, however, rejected these recommendations, and requested the Control Board to choose two licensees in each city from the original applicants.²¹ This decision was another blow to the independence of the Control Board, and ensured that the existing Sydney and Melbourne television licensees, with their powerful radio, newspaper and magazine interests, had a strong influence in the Brisbane and Adelaide sessions.

There was no difference of opinion in Perth and Hobart. All applicants stated that only one licensee should be granted,²² and TVW (in Perth) and Tasmanian Television (in Hobart) were recommended by the Control Board.

By 1961 television had been extended to 33 country areas, which had been allocated one ABC and one commercial television channel. The Paratransit Control had directed that where possible, licenses would be allocated on the basis that they were local independent companies and not associated with the metropolitan services. Two of these licenses were in the large concentrations adjoining Sydney in Newcastle and Wollongong. The Sydney licensees attempted to prevent these two independent stations from attaining parity with the Board tried to impose conditions on the Sydney stations to stop the embargo, but the stations took the Control Board to the High Court, and they succeeded. However, when it became clear that the Government intended to support the Control Board with legislation, the stations gave in.

In March 1965, the Government announced that a third license would be allocated to the four capital cities and a second license for Perth. This decision appears to have resulted from a number of pressures: the advertising industry wanted greater competition, other commercial stations wanted a piece of what appeared to be the profitable television cake (between 1959 and 1961 net profits increased from \$1.5 million to \$2.5 million, yet the Control Board made only a token effort to enforce regulations relating to the amount of Australian content). Gides pressure added the need to break the media monopoly which was building up with existing metropolitan stations (in the previous year Consolidated Press, owners of the FCN license in Sydney, had taken over GTV Melbourne) and the Government's concern that if Labor won the next election it might allow the trade union movement to limit the dual license system.

The reason the Minister gave, however, was that there was more in the landscape, and thus "great competition would result and benefit residents and the development of the television service".²³

There were now applications for the Sydney license and also for Melbourne. GTV Melbourne tried unsuccessfully to intervene in the Melbourne hearings to protect its network interests, should the Control Board decide not to grant a third license in Brisbane and Adelaide, having already granted a third in Sydney and Melbourne. The Control Board disallowed their appearance on the basis that they had not been

16 Submissions and evidence to Royal Commission on Television, 1955 (by Australian Broadcasting Corporation Board).

17 Annals, Parliaments, Report of the Royal Commission on Television, 1954.

18 ABCR Report and Recommendations to the Prime Minister-General Perkins to the Ministerial Act of 1955 and the Television Regulations of Applications to Licensees for Commercial Television Stations in the Sydney area and the Melbourne area. R13 Adopted 17 Feb. ABCR Annual Report, 1956.

19 ABCR Annual Report, 1958.

20 ABCR Report and Recommendations to the Prime Minister-General on Applications for Commercial Television Licenses for New Zealand and Adelaide areas. 1955.

19 ABCR Supplementary Report and Recommendations to the Prime Minister-General on Applications for Commercial Television Licenses for the Brisbane and Adelaide areas.

20 ABCR Report and Recommendations to the Prime Minister-General on Applications for Commercial Television Licenses for Perth and Hobart areas. 1959.

21 ABCR Annual Report, 1962.

able to show an interest, and recommended that the third licensee in the five contest cities should go to applicants with no newspaper interests."

The granting of the 1963 licenses is significant because it brought Australia into television. The Australian company, Austvision, got the Melbourne licence but not the Brisbane licence for which it also applied. The Board recommended Universal Television which had no other commercial television interests, and claimed that the stations would be run by Queenslanders for Queenslanders. Austri then bought up the shares in Universal Television and controlled the company. The Melbourne Board commented: "If an applicant required by the Board to gain his ends by buying his successful rival's shares on the stock exchange, it seems to make the Board's hearings a costly but rather ineffective form of unfair competition."

In recommending South Australian Television Ltd for the licence in Adelaide, the Control Board noted that the majority of shares would be held in South Australia, except for some held by Austri. This action (SAS-20) was taken over by TVW Perth in 1971, however, and now the majority of shares are held in Western Australia. In Perth, Austri also had a small number of shares in Swan Television, the successful applicant for the second licence.

So, by July 1963, when the third stations in Brisbane and Adelaide went on air (the last of this group to do so), the structure was completed in its present form, and what Richard Beyer feared in 1953 had arrived — endless hours of daytime to be filled.

Standards

The major concern with the standards for television has always been over the amount of Australian-made programs (which is essential) rather than their quality (which is not). At the Royal Commission hearings, the case in favor of Australia's content was frequently argued in terms of slowing Australian culture and the need to employ Australians and develop Australia's talent.

A large number of submissions from parents and teachers were concerned about the amount of American programs which might be shown,

and the commercials that went with them. Other witnesses cited America's content which showed that the number of hours children spent viewing television was beginning to equal that spent at school, that there was a considerable reduction in the time children spent at play, that television watching caused depressed mental activity, and that the amount of violence on television was having an effect on children.

Addressing himself to the quality of the programs, Richard Beyer again made some pointed comments in his submission:

"The hours of telecasting and the number of stations operating should be strictly related to the availability of material of good quality. As with radio, it is possible to put programs of a sort at small cost on the TV screen. The interests both of the public and of the producers of TV require limitation of hours to a point where standards can be maintained."

In the light of the subsequent development of television it is interesting to note that Beyer seemed to the Commission an article which had appeared in the *New York Times*, written by Jack Gold, a radio critic.

"Television is getting pretty bad. The high topics which were held by so many are standing before our eyes. The medium is leading hell beat for the rest of innuendo, mediocrity and amorality that make a jokers box of radio. What of the endless procession of crime thrillers and of the panel shows with the same faces appearing over and over again with unrelenting regularity? And the children's programs? Is there no more now than the astounding trivia wherein the younger generation sing the praises of cereals and candy bars? Are those programs to be the sole measure of the child's inheritance, the riches of the library and the treasures of the world? Television take heed! It is blindly and shortsightedly selling its ultimate promise for a bunch of synthetic regularity ratings that are boring into TV's foundation like rust."

The Royal Commission, commenting on standards, stated that there was strong evidence from two groups: those who saw themselves as potential listeners favoring self-regulation; and those who believed that self-regulation would not be an "adequate means of insulating standards" because commercial pressures would encourage mediocrity, and the poverty of Australian talent would encourage the introduction of cheap and inferior overseas programs to meet costs. The Commission recommended that:

"The most effective method of raising standards is through the licensing system with provision for a public hearing where the Australian Broadcasting Control Board does not think that it is in the public interest that a

license should be renewed. If the public puts up with inferior television, it will only have itself to blame if it fails to take advantage of the means provided for the expression of its dissatisfaction. What is needed is a vocal public which will offer constructive criticism and refuse to be satisfied with inferior programs. In the United Kingdom the public and press are very active in expressing from week to week opinion on each particular type of program. In the United States, many organizations have been set up with the sole object of using public opinion as a means of improving quality. An active policy of constructive public criticism is essential in Australia if television is to reach the standard desired."

The history of the Australian Broadcasting Control Board's regulation of television, until its demise in 1978, suggests that it did not at any time believe it should set up an open hearing to provide a forum for the public to voice their comments on television programming. Secondly, the result of the Government's interference in the licensing system in 1958 was that the press, the other possible medium for a critical voice, was not impeded.

Australian Content

Another reason the employment argument has tended to swamp the one for high quality is a clause introduced into the legislation in 1942, and retained since. It requires the commercial licensee, and the ABC, to "as far as possible aid the services of Australians."

The Royal Commission Report in 1953 had noted that Australian artists should play a real and steadily increasing part in Australian television, but it also stated that it was not possible to recommend a quota of Australian content until actual experience had been gained on the amount of talent available.

At the public hearings for the granting of the first licenses in Sydney in 1953, Clive Evans QC appeared for Actors Equity and asked the applicants what were their intentions in relation to Australian programming and the employment of Australian artists. He made a very strong plea to the Board to request as a condition of the license not less than 55 per cent program hours of Australian content.

The Control Board noted, however, that it did not intend to recommend any such condition, as it felt new licensees would discharge the obligation of creating that but use was made of Australian talent. It did recommend, however, that the granting of licenses should be on the condition that the licensee complied with any previous standards the Board determined.

Although there was no Australian content quota during the first month of operation, there were severe restrictions as the amount of overseas programming permitted because of the shortage of overseas currency. The Government limited such expenditure on overseas content to £60,000, of which not more than two-thirds could be spent in U.S. dollars. This meant a lot of programs were kept live material (there were no video recording machines until 1969).²⁵

But in July 1953, the Government relaxed the restriction, despite public pressure for its retention as an Australian content control mechanism. It is significant that the percentage of Australian content before the restriction was 54.6 per cent, 46 per cent, 43 per cent, 41 per cent, and 39 per cent, for ABC, 3TV, 6TV, 9TV, and HSV, 45 per cent, by



Above: Newsnight being interviewed on TCN



Pick a few corners with Dyer (right) captures a one-on-one with the champion, Barry Frost, with the back-jumped.

²⁵ Australian Performance: the technology of Television, ABC, Chime 118.
²⁶ ABC's Annual Report 1986.

September 1958 programming hours had increased, but Australian content had dropped to below 45 per cent for all stations, with TCN the lowest at 37 per cent.¹⁷

Public pressure for more Australian content continued to grow, and in 1960 the Minister introduced the first quota. He advised licensees that the proportion of Australian programs televised by each station at the end of three years of operation should be not less than 40 per cent, and must include at least one hour a week, between 7.30 p.m. and 9.30 p.m. However, the annual report of the Control Board for June 1962 showed that neither of the Sydney commercial stations had reached that 40 per cent when the Piesensley-Gentoni announced the proposed introduction of a third channel in the other five capital cities.

Throughout 1962, and during the public hearings for a third commercial license in Sydney and Melbourne, the Control Board heard evidence from applicants about why plans for Australian programs in the coming years would be successful. The Sydney and Melbourne Control Board stated that it was impressed with the Sydney applicant (United Television) and quoted from its submission: "A real and persistent effort should be made to bring a fresh, original and Australian approach to all types of entertainment programming".

The Board, in recommending the Melbourne license to Austereum Television Ltd, stated that it attached great importance to the nature of the program proposals of this licensee. These proposals included 26.5 hours of programs of Australian origin, or 58 per cent in the first year of operation, and a gradual increase in the second and third years. The company also sought to create "a strong Australian image in its programs", and that "the content of the program would also need to reflect an Australian environment encouraging awareness of the achievements of Australia and advance the arts and crafts culture of the nation".

The hearings for the third license in Brisbane and Adelaide, however, attracted considerable evidence alleging that an additional channel would have deleterious effects on the existing commercial stations. The Control Board stated in its Report that it recognized this, and that there may be some reduction in the level of production of Australian programs, but the commitment would not necessarily lead to serious results. It stated that:

"Any reduction of the amount of Australian programs produced locally would we consider be largely offset by the use of some of the increasing quantity of good quality Australian programs which will become available particularly as a result of the productions of the new Sydney and Melbourne stations".

To appease the growing pressure for more Australian content from the unions, independent film producers, and the public, the Government set up the Select Committee on the Encouragement of Australian Productions for Television, chaired by Senator Vinnicombe. It had evidence in all states and considered a great deal of interest and evidence, and reported to the Government, in 1963.¹⁸ This committee was very critical of the Control Board's regulation of commercial television and made a number of recommendations, some of which are only now coming into effect:

- (a) That applications for a license renewal should be heard in public;
- (b) That the renewal period for a television

AUSTRALIAN QUOTA REQUIREMENTS FOR TELEVISION*

Year	Quota: All Programs	7.30p.m.-9.30p.m.	Drama	Children
1960	40 per cent	4 hours a month		
1960	"VIGILANT REPORT"			
1961	40 per cent	4 hours a month		
1962	50 per cent (Gross) (Net: 50 per cent)			
1963	50 per cent	12 hours a month	2 hours a month	
1963	50 per cent	15 hours a month		
1970	"MINISET AUSTRALIAN" CAMPAIGN			
		9p.m.-10p.m.		
1970	50 per cent including credit free renewal films	40 per cent	8 hours a month	4 hours a month
1975	"LAMP" BOARD REPORTS			
1972	Public system introduced		8 hours a month	4 hours a month
1974			8 hours a month	8 hours a month
1976			8 hours a month	10 hours a month
	Decrease programs allowed			
1977	"AST SELF-REGULATION INQUIRY"			

20th ABCN Annual Report, 1974-75

26th ABCN Annual Report, 1973-75

license be extended from one to three years after the first five years.

- (c) That ten productions be allowed for companies producing and investing in film;
- (d) That the overall volume of programs depicting crime, violence, horror and antisocial behavior be considerably reduced;
- (e) That there be a quota for Australian drama programs of not less than 9 per cent of total time devoted to programs of Australian origin to be imposed progressively over the next ensuing three years; and
- (f) That an Australian Television Council be responsible for planning and co-ordinating a national research program.

The Vincent Committee made other recommendations to encourage Australian production and filmmaking, which had never seen the light of day. So, while the recommendations were well received by the public, they were not taken seriously by the Government, which adjourned its parliamentary debate on the Report in April 1964 and never returned to it.

Public Pressure

The Vincent Committee was the beginning of the slow process of raising awareness to media and film issues within industry organizations and with the public. The Control Board could no longer view a blind eye to the Australian content issue. It set up research into audience attitudes to programming,¹⁹ and gradually raised the percentage quotas in the pressure continued to grow (see Table 3). However, it appeared incapable of actually imposing these quotas.

The lack of media publicity for the Government's motion gradually stimulated awareness of the problems of media monopoly. Some actions responded by demanding a break-up of media control. The recommendations for

ending the film industry and looking to distribution and exhibition alternatives led to growing pressure from filmmakers which resulted in a Kinematograph Film and Television Act, 1965 on the professional training of film and television scriptwriters, producers and directors. From this arose the recommendations for the Australian Film Development Corporation, the Experimental Film Fund, and the Film and Television School. The Vincent Committee's recommendations for a national television council were taken over by interested artists,²⁰ which formed a council to put the recommendations into operation.

All this activity spawned the "TV — Make it Australian" campaign of 1971. Media artists, filmmakers and individuals working in the film and television industry organized petitions, telegrams, letters and other forms of protest. They sought an inquiry into the structure of Australian television and assistance for Australian films. These petitions were presented to the Senate and had two results: in August 1971, the Senate Standing Committee on Education, Science and the Arts was given the mandate to inquire into "all aspects of television and broadcasting including Australian content of television programs" under the chairmanship of Senator Davidson, and, in March 1972, the Minister for Trade and Industry requested the Tariff Board to inquire into, and recommend on, the assistance needed for production in Australia of motion picture films and television programs. These bodies took evidence throughout 1972 from the film and television industry.

The Tariff Board reported in June 1973²¹ making recommendations to assist Australian film production, distribution and exhibition, including the setting up of a government body to invest in films, and a strategy for breaking up the distribution and exhibition monopolies. The

Continued on P. 58

17. ABCN Annual Report, 1958

18. ABCN Annual Report, 1963

19. Australian Parliament, Report of the Senate Select Committee on Broadcasting and Australian Productions for Television (1963) (Vincent Committee).

20. Australian Broadcasting Control Board, Australian Television, 1964-1973. Australian Broadcasting Tribunal, Television and the Public, Melbourne, 1977.

21. Report from Main Consultations Conference, November 1968. Conducted by media artists and ACSRA.

22. Tariff Board, Report on Tariff Review Motion Picture Film and Television Programs, June 1973.



ROBERT BRUNING

How was General Productions set up?

General dates from 1971, when I was making *The Godfather*, which was my first television series. There were five of us involved in the production: Michael Laurence, the writer, Bill Hughes and Alister Smart, who were directors, David Blumkin, the production manager, and myself. I was anxious to ensure that all of us were financially involved in the production, but the others felt that a share of the profits wasn't as satisfactory as some equity in the company.

I wasn't prepared to give them equity in my family company, so I set up General Productions as a strictly package production company. It was called General because there were many people in the group with first star sign.

We did a lot of television while the half-hour weekly series was still popular. We knew how to work successfully and, though we were not making a fortune, we did quite nicely. I was making *The Godfather* for \$5000 an episode, not making money on it — that was quite a neat trick. The series was \$400 an episode and I calculated on having to make 22 episodes to break even.

How was the series financed?

That came about because of a public challenge. Clyde Packer made with Bobby Lamb, after Lamb had gone to the press and said that television stations were prepared to back small Australian producers. Lamb maintained that, given the chance, he could make a half-hour television series for \$5000 an episode. Clyde capitulated by saying that if Lamb could, he would place an order then and there. Finally, Lamb backed off and I just happened to run into Clyde at the time. I offered to make a series for \$5000 an episode, and, as luck would have it, we made a good pilot and got the order.

As it turned out, the series was as successful: after 26 episodes Michael, who had written every episode, started to go round the bend. So he wrote himself out and

As Australia's feature film industry developed from the revival of 1970, it was inevitable that the closely-related fields of features and television would overlap. One area where this is particularly apparent is tele-features, which are often funded by the Australian Film Commission, as well as by commercial television stations.

A pioneer of the tele-feature is Robert Bruning, a producer whose name is as associated with acting as with the television shows he has produced. "The Godfather", a series which Bruning began in 1971 on a budget of \$5600 an episode, was a courageous start. It was soon followed by a string of tele-features, which includes "The Alternative", "Mama's Gone A-Hunting" and "Is There Anybody There?".

Bruning, who still alternates between producing and acting, was recently in Melbourne working for Crawford Productions. There he spoke to Peter Bellby and Scott Murray.



Robert Bruning (seated from left) and cast from *The Godfather*

wrote Harold Hughes in. We contrasted with the show for another two years, then we fell on hard times. I was doing the *True Blue Show*, my first variety show, and it was too much to bite off. It died in the Christmas of 1973, and in 1974 I couldn't even get arrested. Fortunately, I got a role in *Sunday Tea Far Away* and Crawford, who had always been kind to me, offered me work. But it just wasn't enough, especially since I got married that year.

Well, somebody loved you...

Yes, somebody loved me. Then I

desisted the idea of making television films back to back, but I couldn't convince anybody there was a market for them. The evidence was there because Sydney Goldberg had been making them very successfully in the U.S., but no one would listen.

Then in 1975, I finally got an order. It was from Channel 9 for a terrible thing called *Paradise*. I made it in Sydney, Paradise, and although I would like to forget it, it has been shown as American prime-time in syndication. Paramount bought it outright, in fact, it's the only one I ever sold —

the rest are in distribution.

Channel 9 then gave me a chance on *Is There Anybody There?*, which was the first of the five tele-features I made. But in 1976, as I did very well. On the basis of it, Channel 9 gave me my first back-to-back order, which were the three we made in 1977: *Mama's Gone A-Hunting*, *The Alternative* and *Game to General*. They all rated well, but I came up against the combination of things that happens to small independent producers. Because television formats made in Australia are not viable, you have to duddle finance, because you are deficit financed, you have to keep your deficit as low as possible, because you are trying to keep your deficit as low as possible, you have to keep your own and as low as possible and you live on virtually nothing, and so on. Obviously, I didn't slave in debt, but I didn't have the necessary financial resources to keep that sort of structure going.

I then looked at the forecasts and it seemed that by the end of 1978 I was going to be into various mediums for more than \$500,000. Now although I am not a particularly pessimistic sort of person, I knew that if I went bad at the age of 48, there was no way I was going to be able to pay that sort of money back. As a production company, I needed the controls of a bigger organization.

I then spoke to Reg Ginnery. Reg was already a drama producer of substance, but he wanted to widen the range of his drama activities, the apogee of which was that I sold General Productions to Reg, with a contract to run it for me for two years. That contract expired on October 31, last year.

General is now a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Ginnery Organization, and will remain so. My relationship with Reg is such that when they want to do a television feature, and they feel I might be the right kind of producer, I could be brought in as a contract producer — should I be available.

It was a very positive transfer, the only difference being that I had much bigger office, and though I still write the cheques, I didn't get

to sign them any more. I also had the opportunity to develop other projects. This meant I could take on a bigger production schedule in 1977. We did, so that year, which was slightly too early.

You used to create a technique of making three features on very low budgets. What did that involve?

The first thing is to have all the scripts ready and locked-off before the first day of pre-production. Then, if you take on the right sort of highly professional handworking production staff, you can virtually pre-produce three features simultaneously. The films might not all be happening at once, but lots of one film could be started so while another is shooting, and so on.

We used to shoot the films in three on-day weeks with a week's lay-off in between for the crew to collapse. In effect, we were affording people three months' work, with lots of money. All the films had urban locations, so theoretically the crew could just leave to their homes every night. It didn't quite work out that way, though, as some of the days were quite long.

There were a lot of economies like that, which reduce your overheads enormously. But the whole thing won't work unless your scripts are locked-off. If you have any problems with script alterations and so forth, then the whole thing falls to pieces. As we discovered last year, it all falls to pieces with acts of God. Paul Eddley became very ill while he was working on these projects and we were forced to postpone one of them in the middle. Now that is not just the postponement of a film, it is the postponement of everything that follows.

Your first three tele-features were done with Channel 7. Did they put up the money?

They bought them in advance, Channel 7 bought the television rights and the Australian Film Commission put up the deficit. Channel 7 also had a very modest percentage of the films. They are beautiful customers in the sense that once you have proved that you can do what they want, nobody knows you. I like to think that I enjoy an excellent relationship with Channel 7, though I wish they would pay me a little more.

What figure are we talking about for a tele-feature?

It varied over the years. In 1977, the figure offered by the television stations was somewhere between \$70,000 and \$84,000, depending on the length of format — i.e. 90 minutes or two hours. Now that, against budgets of between \$125,000 and \$135,000, so there is a fairly heavy deficit, and you are not going to make that up from your advance from a distributor.

Did the financing of the tele-features change when Grady became involved?

No, they were still deftly financed by the AFC.

So Grady's didn't have any involvement in the projects, except by virtue of their production company...

I don't think their total contribution is reflected in the budgets, the provision of facilities and so forth are only accountably charged for in the budget. I would say that Grady's contribution was heavy, and, of course, in between productions, he kept my staff and ran busy developing properties. Now that's a pain. The money that has gone into those scripts has not come from the AFC, but the Grady Organization's pockets. I



would imagine that in the past, 18 months considering the Australian operation as well, the Grady

Organization's involvement on cinema would have been a success of \$100,000. That's a lot of bread, and one of the things a cinema producer like myself can't bankroll.

You said that your first three tele-features started well. How was that treated?

Tom Richardson has been appointed as the Australian representative of the Grady Organization. As well, Ruth Kroll in Los Angeles does work for the company.



Elaine Lee and Eric Griffith in *Love Is Casual*, one of the three tele-features financing pre-1977.



Weedy Bagdasarian and Carle Bagdasarian in the publicity regard to *The All-Americans*.



innocent or guilty. In early episodes, the role of the court reporter who hosted each case was partly that of a master of ceremonies, and partly go-between to the audience's home. Later, dramatic values were centered on the people in a case.

From a production point of view, the format was very economical. The early part of the week was spent in writing and editing the script, casting, set preparation and other stages of pre-production. Most of the Thomson subunit, held in Crawford's space in the Oldfield Building, was given over to the learning of lines and coaching of acting performance, and, at the same time, working out actors' movements and sequencing shows. Friday was spent in making necessary changes to the script and giving actors extra rehearsals.

Tape-recording took place on Saturday morning at the HSV Theatre in Collingwood, converted for the morning into a television studio. Before the introduction of videotape, recording took place by filming the finished-off stage of a monitor, a process known as limbering. Limbering was difficult, so recording went from one commercial break to the next — say major parade means the sequence had to be shot again. Each hour-long episode was required to be shot in three and a half hours of studio time, under the arrangement with HSV, was five beyond that was credited to Crawford.

Although *Consider Your Verdict* won only moderate ratings (see fig. 31), the series was important on a number of counts. Running to over 160 episodes, it was the most successful local production to that point in time. Moreover, it was the first drama series made outside a station by an independent producer — a situation that was very much the rule in the 1940s and 1950s when radio drama was produced by the transcription houses, and again today with television drama, but was very much the exception in the early 1960s. For Crawford, the success of *Consider Your Verdict* helped consolidate its position in the television production industry.

Typical of the company, the program helped establish a pattern of production which changed little until the early 1970s. The key figures in the development of this pattern were Dorothy and Ken Crawford, with Dorothy in charge of drama production. On *Consider Your Verdict* the same trio also edited scripts, supervised the casting, and wrote and drama-produced the early episodes of the series. Gradually she developed a small team that took over several of these functions, but under her control. Phil Freeman, an ex-radio writer who joined the company in 1961, became script editor on the series, and Simon Birt, who joined instead the same time, and had a background in the theatre, started as an acting coach, became casting director for a time, wrote scripts and



Ken Crawford oversees 'Show for the People' making the law (1961)



Vern Stierman, who took over law program after the departure of Ken Crawford in 1967



Ken Crawford videotapes his students before the taping of a talent show

was finally drama director on the later episodes of *Consider Your Verdict*. Essentially, then team was responsible for the dramatic values of the series.

Ken Crawford was in charge of technical production. On *Consider Your Verdict* this involved movement blocking in the Oldfield building, in preparation for video directing in

the Collingwood studio. Crawford was also in charge of post-production, supervising such things as music and sound mixing. When, a few years later and starting with *Hemlock*, film was used instead of video for outside location work, Ken Crawford was placed in overall control of this area of production as well. The team were mostly trained by people who had come



The *Hemlock* team as it was in 1974. From left to right: Simon Birt, Ken Crawford, Dorothy Crawford, Phil Freeman, and Charles 'Bud' Taylor.



Simon Birt, Ken Crawford, and Phil Freeman (left) worked on *Hemlock* at Crawford's second higher rating program after *Hemlock* up to 1972



Ken Crawford in *Hemlock*, a series which cemented in the station's idea of a private hospital



Norman Crawford

A scene from *Consider the Verdict*. Crawford's first production venture into television. It was adapted from a highly successful radio program.

through the mystery system of the suburban department.

This pattern of production had several implications. The division and specialization of labor was such that it was difficult for any one individual to guide an episode of a Crawford series from conception to finished product (not only on *Consider the Verdict*, but all

productions at Crawford's up to the early 1970s). *Verdict* was then structurally impossible because of the pattern of specialization: if anything, authorship on those early programs was collective and anonymous. And yet, periodically, while individual authorship was denied, the credit was promised in large measure because it became a means of controlling and focusing the efforts of various divisions of the company while it passed through the different stages of production. Thus, the area of production given most importance was the writing, with writers being the best paid and most highly-regarded employees in the company.

Finally, the pattern centered around that the family retained control of its programs. Even if the family members were unable to supervise the finer details of production, they could, through the teams they had developed, retain overall guidance and control. The final credit of a Crawford program in those years — "A Crawford Production" — was a silent expression of the dominance of the family in the company.

Like in 1963, *Consider Your Verdict* was cancelled. Crawford had already developed a new series, *Heiðskild*, and had sunk its own money into a pilot episode, *The Street*, written by Phil Freedman and Ian Jones. Although HSV Channel 7 was interested, other sales had to be made before the new series could go into regular production. Even then the company found that they were getting back less than the program cost, and it was two years before *Heiðskild* began to show a profit.

From the beginning, however, the new series retained *Consider Your Verdict*. It started on Melbourne television in late 1965, and in Sydney only in 1967, within months it was among the 10 most popular programs in both cities. From 1966 to 1972 it was the most popular program on Australian television, and only *Darling* 4 came close to rivaling it.

Despite obvious differences, *Heiðskild* showed some interesting similarities with *Consider Your Verdict*. Like the latter, *Heiðskild* was based on a recurring plot machine: a murder and its investigation; rather than on characterization. The homicide squad did contain regular characters, but far more of its run these were not the subject of dramatic interest. Altogether there were 15 changes of police characters: the original team was John Fegan, Tony McDermott and Lex Mitchell; the final one was Charles Truogall, Don Barker, Gary Day and Dennis Grayson.

Like *Consider Your Verdict*, the stress was on authenticity. The lists of the Victorian police department were available to the writers (although writers also had access to the company's own police drama script from the radio days). Police advisors vetted scripts for facts and accuracy, and the department

helped in such things as blocking off traffic for film shooting, showing scenes in places like Russell St and the Police Academy, and providing microphones, ambulances, etc.

The first 13 episodes of *Heiðskild* culminated in a documentary trial using the same kind as *Consider Your Verdict*. In practical terms, the trial would occupy half time. These vignettes were shot on videotape.

However, it was in the use of filmed scenes that *Heiðskild* broke with its predecessor. The program started on a note of about one length of film (about 16 minutes of screen time) to two of videotape. This was gradually increased until, just before it converted to all film and color in 1972, film and videotape were of about equal length.

Film enabled *Heiðskild* to move outdoors; it saw the introduction of physical action, chases and fights. It also saw the introduction of a side of a large Australian city with which most viewers were familiar, but which had not been seen previously on local television. For many of those working on the program, this was one of the chief reasons for its success, a view echoed and supported by John C. Murray in his 1973 article.

In *Heiðskild* and *Darling* it is the dramatic character, often and often as embodied in a world we know — the suburban landscape of narrow-gated South Melbourne timber cottages, Carlton back streets and lanes, the Victoria docks, the Dymally and railway yard.

More than anything else, the location shooting around the series good to look at and apart it all suggests that a consciousness of time I've been talking about. If a sometime drunk-walker is being pursued by the boys in blue, then he'll be hurried down Australia back streets, alleys and courtyards, the equivalent of his crime sketched by the squintiness of the settings.

For more than 10 years *Heiðskild* was to be at the centre of Crawford's operation. Its success tended to confirm the company in a certain line of thinking. After the cancellations of *Heiðskild*, an ambitious attempt to a new series which could not resolve what it wanted to be Ian Fleming or John Le Carré, was abandoned. Crawford left back on the police format for a new series (it had begun preparing in late 1968 for the Nine Network to replace the old series).

Originally titled *Saints and Sinners* and set in the St. Kilda police station, it was changed to *Darling* and set in the Victoria Police station. It was rejected at first on the basis that it was a bad idea on the site. By way of saving the police format, the new series continued on a suburban police station, and replaced uniforms for police on the beat, as well as plain-clothes detectives.

Because of the evident popularity of the home-grown police series, ATV-9 tried to

Peter Corbally (right) and Brian Pether (left) were involved in the production of *The Box*, the television series which followed *Consider the Verdict*.Dramatic moment in *The Box*, the television series which followed *Consider the Verdict*.Daring (left) in *Daring* at Crawford's police series, *Daring*.

make its own version of the prize. It commissioned former Sydney radio producer Ron Luck to produce *The Long Arm*, but created the show after poor ratings. The outcome then approached Crawford and Matlock Police went in as the following year.

Then after its demise, *Homefile* still has an obvious glow of attraction for viewers the company and even its competitors. As an executive at Crawford said, "Cap shows always come back."

A year after its cancellation, Crawford was back to the police format with *Henry*, a series that had only lukewarm ratings and after completing its 39-episode format was not renewed. Meanwhile, the Reg Grundy Organisation had its first shot at the format with *King's Men*, a series that found an even earlier grave.

Late in 1977, an obvious marriage of superstars and the police format took place when Crawford produced *Cap Sledge*. Currently, Crawford and Grundy are preparing pilots for new police series. Crawford's series is tentatively titled *Murder Squad*.

Despite this tendency to fall back on what is known and successful, there have also been conscious attempts to find variations within the format. With *Benbow*, Crawford tried to develop the personality of the individual police. However, the different writers tended to get out of step and the character became atypical, like their counterparts in *Homefile*. So the experiment was abandoned in later episodes. However, when Don Batye was recruited to produce, the series successfully developed and developed the police character.

Matlock Police, in fact, also ran the risk of duplicating *Homefile*. In later episodes, however, a more real writing was achieved, but it was only in *Solo One*, a half-hour spin off, and *Young Ramsey*, an hour series about a veterinary surgeon, that the company got into the police drama where potential is contained in *Matlock Police Solo One* and *Young Ramsey* were produced by Henry Crawford, one of the later producers of *Matlock Police*.

Crawford's second outside the police format has been pitcher and left detective. *Ryan*, a series that attempted to give private detectives the same glamorous exciting lives that *Hunter* had given special agents, was even less successful than its predecessor. Of these three comedy series, *The Last of the Australian* did reasonably well, but *The Hurricane Boys* and *Bobby Dazzler* were cancelled.

The Box was Crawford's first venture into soap opera, but only after Cash-Herman's *Number 96* had opened up this area almost two years earlier. While it was never as popular as its Sydney counterpart, it achieved respectable success and helped the company greatly in a very difficult period.

Crawford's other series have been *Hotel Story* and *The Sullivan Hotel Story* has been cancelled after eight episodes had been made, and before any were due to air. As for *The Sullivan*, a recent McMen survey listed it as the most successful local serial in current production.

In those years, Crawford grew to be the largest drama production house in Australia. Unlike several other production groups which were reluctant to venture into more than one series at a time, for fear of not being able to attract sufficient competent writers and technicians, Crawford had always been willing to expand production to meet demand. By 1974 it had five premises on air — *Homefile*, *Division 4*, *Matlock Police*, *Ryan* and *The Box* — and was producing 6.5 hours of television drama each week.

The company had also ballooned in size. In 1964, when *Homefile* had started, there were about 30 people on staff. 10 years later there were nearly 400. This staff was housed in the Oldfield Building, then at nearby buildings before Crawford moved to new premises in Southmead Cms., Abbotsford, in 1973. These premises were large enough to accommodate three sound stages. Gair refused to rent as well as the company staff. The executives of the premises were made aware in Channel 12 in The Box 3.

As the company swelled in size, the lively drive to retain control of the direction of growth. To the initial script editing and production team of Phil Piccolini and Sonia Bone were added Ian Juma, Douglas Turah, Terry Stapleton, Tom Hignerty and Howard Griffiths. This group became an integral nucleus for the development of the different series and created a well-planned management structure. Through script editing and production conferences, they gave new recruits the same kind of assistance into the company as they had received themselves earlier.

The emphasis of scriptwriting policies was apparent to the company in other ways. After about 1973, when the production system that developed with *Consider Your Verdict* was changed so that one person was in overall control of a program, that person was more likely to come from the past of older writers than anywhere else in the company.

Also, in the early 1970s when Crawford

instituted the position of associate director of the company — partly an honorary title in recognition of contribution, but also as an attempt to open better lines of communication between writers and management — 11 of the first 12 associate directors had been writers.

Nevertheless, close supervision and control by the family became impossible as the company grew. This was perhaps most apparent in the production area. By early 1974, it was impossible to keep all five programs under the same degree of close supervision. Producers found that they could be left alone for long periods to get on with their programs only that it was subjected to a burst of worried scrutiny. Many staff developed split loyalties — to the company, but also to their programs.

Homefile remained at the centre of production, but it too changed. Starting with Hunter Crawford developed a policy of starting newcomers on *Homefile* and moving more experienced people into the new programs. *Homefile*, with new programs being added in 1964, 1970, 1972 and 1975, newcomers was a spending loss and lost time in apprenticeship and were absorbing much less of the family's way of doing things. In other words, as Crawford grew and more shows went into production, the creative space in which people in the company worked remained.

Homefile was the only one of the police series to go on to an all-film format, which it did in 1978. *Ryan* was also produced in this new system, but *Division 4* and *Matlock Police* stayed in film-type production up to the time they ceased production. The company also decided to have the same director shoot the features as well as the action, a decision making for potentially greater visual and dramatic coherence, but one at odds with the company's previous organization of production.

This decision, which moved some of the company's programs out from under the normal control of the family, was reinforced by the company's agreement to change the title of the position of Henry Crawford from a distant cousin of the family and move on the board of directors and Don Batye on *Homefile* and *Division 4* from that of script editors to executive producers. An executive producer was given overall control of a program, and writers, script editors and directors were ultimately responsible to him. From this time on, therefore, it is possible and fruitful to search for authorial presence at this level in Crawford's output.

The company now had agreed to institute the new position because, by this stage, it was planning *The Box* which was to be its first drama serial in television. Unlike a series where each episode is a self-contained story, perhaps with regular characters, a serial has



Myra Fields, Johnny Fenderson and Terry Newell in one of Crawford's few ventures into comedy. *Bobby Dazzler*.



Clashing between takes on the set of *The Hurricane Boys*.



After Adele Ryan (left) with Bob Hunter on a scene from *The Last of the Australians*.

changing relationships among the characters, as well as a continuous story. It is, therefore, suggested that someone has overall control of individual episodes as well as overall direction of the program in a way that it is not casual with a story. Since *The Box*, Crawford has made two further attempts, *The Sullivan* and *Cop Shop*, and has another (*Skyways*) in production.

Disaster struck in early 1975. Within months, the three networks cancelled the police series through production was not to end until early the following year. Whether the cancellations were coincidental was, and is, a matter of speculation in the industry. One theory had it that the networks were an attempt to cut Crawford down to size, for by that time the company was easily the most important outside supplier of drama programs to the networks in Australia.

In addition, in the early years of the Labor Government there was talk of taking over one television station license from a licensee. 0-30 seemed the most vulnerable network and, after all, Crawford had been an unsuccessful union licensee applicant in 1962.

Another theory had it that Crawford was covertly playing politics and several of the most vocal elements in the "TV, make it Australian" campaign were actors employed on the company's payroll. There was also a story that the campaign had sent telegrams to Canberra politicians using tele machines at Crawford. However, from the stations' point of view, the cancellations were justified by the dropping ratings.

The cancellations certainly cut down the company. The years 1975 and 1976 were as difficult for Crawford as had been the period between 1956 and 1961. Indeed, had it not been for *The Box*, which continued in production until 1977, the company could have gone into receivership. As it was, large contracts had to be made, and by early 1976 staff was down to about 70. Production teams were broken up, and senior and junior employees were refreshed.

The years since have been a process of cautious regrowth. Domestic sales have developed and are cushioned by the Australian market. Three programs are on air, and there are several projects in preparation.

However, in all that time in television Crawford has never developed a production base in Sydney, although it has toyed with the idea. Parts of *Hawkeye* were shot there and it was originally intended to base *Waverley* there. The success this year of *Pelicans*, which Grundy Productions, a Sydney-based company, is making for ATV-9 in Melbourne is an ominous development. It means that Crawford now faces major competition in its home market, a market it has always dominated. *



Tony Sumner left and Geoff Berry in Crawford's suit soap-opera, *Skyways*.

Figure 2

CRAWFORD TELEVISION PRODUCTIONS MELBOURNE SCREENING DATES AND RATINGS*

One-hour Series

			Av. Rating
Consider Your Verdict	(7)	17.241 - 20.181	17
		7.142 - 16.124	14
		21.163 - 22.166	13
		7.111-9 - 10.192	8
		18.236 - 20.848	8
Nonstop	(7)	20.064 - 15.124	23
		26.148 - 23.83	31
		27.468 - 14.124	33
		28.148 - 26.132	47
		24.141 - 19.124	41
		20.166 - 17.124	41
		16.118 - 27.124	41
		27.170 - 20.132	41
		16.171 - 16.171	39
		1.372 - 7.172	36
		6.171 - 6.171	36
		21.74 - 9.474	30
		7.74 - 20.174	25
		4.278 - 11.278	16
		3.478 - 18.178	30
		14.278 - 25.278	13
		14.278 - 16.77	38

6 EPISODES CANNED

Hunter	(6)	8.767 - 28.1767	20
		26.844 - 27.145	22
		22.169 - 8.569	22
Divisive 4	(6)	11.288 - 16.1189	40 (Tops 6)
		27.720 - 11.278	32
		14.71 - 17.171	32
		26.72 - 8.172	28
		7.72 - 6.172	34
		12.724 - 8.174	34
		12.724 - 8.1274	16
Marlock Police	(6)	28.176 - 7.476	17
		26.271 - 21.271	20
		23.772 - 9.172	20
		28.170 - 16.170	22
		17.74 - 31.1674	24
		16.170 - 12.970	20
		6.171 - 16.171	7
		1.178 - 8.278	2
		14.377 - 16.377	8

7 EPISODES CANNED

Rye	(7)	27.673 - 8.173	17
		7.174 - 19.174	13
		18.176 - 24.177	17
Waverley	(7)	26.78 - 11.278	18
		23.77 - 25.677	7
The Bluebirds Boys	(6)	16.676 - 10.1276	18
		11.77 - 23.77	6A

10 EPISODES CANNED

Hotel Story	(6)	13.777 - 16.777	11
Young Remedy	(7)	4.177 - 28.178	17
		28.177 -	

4 EPISODES CANNED

Cop Shop	(7)	28.177 -	
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Half-hour Series

The Box	(6)	11.274 - 29.174	20
		14.778 - 31.778	23
		26.178 - 36.178	17
		11.277 - 27.677	9
Lost of the Australians	(6)	17.676 - 26.1276	24
		14.676 - 11.476	14
Sole One	(7)	16.676 - 10.676	21
The Sullivan	(6)	15.178 - 11.277	24
		6.278 -	
Berby Daxler	(7)	20.177 - 10.276	14

*Compiled from a list prepared by Colin Jones of the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal

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GEORGE MILLER



How do you see the role of a director on a series such as "Against the Wind"?

No differently from that of being a director of a feature. Basically, a director's job is to take a piece of literature, in this case a script, and turn it into a series of images. It's a kind of translation. You start with a writer's ideas, which you then have to translate, as faithfully as possible, onto a television or cinema screen. In the process you can greatly influence the output—hopefully improving it.

I think all directors like to feel that their work is significant. Now, if a writer tries to force a certain kind of shot on me, as a director, I usually find the finished product doesn't have any vitality.

On "Against the Wind" there were two directors, and the scripts were controlled—in some cases written—by Ian Jones and Ewelyn Simon. Did this ever conflict with your stamp of individuality?

I think they resolved that problem when they chose Simon Winsor and me as directors. Not only are Simon and I close friends, we have worked together for nearly 10 years, starting with *Cash and Company*. Our ideas on filmmaking tend to agree, and whatever arose, when they picked Simon and me,

While many television directors await the day they can move out of television into feature filmmaking, George Miller is happiest where he is. A director of many of the top-rating series Crawfords have produced, including "Homicide", "The Sullivans" and "Young Ramsey", Miller has also worked outside that company. With Simon Winsor he directed "Cash and Company" and the highly successful "Against the Wind".

To find out how different directing television was from making features, *Cinema Papers* sent Peter Westfield to interview George Miller, who was preparing for the new series of "Young Ramsey".

that they were not going to put radically different looking episodes. If they had chosen a director other than Simon, however, there could have been obvious differences between the programs. I think they were very lucky to have us.

You left Crawfords only to work on other projects...

It is a pattern I set up when I first left Crawfords years ago. Russell and I think we were were standing an independent company,

Homestead Films, to produce *Cash and Company*. I knew them fairly well—I had worked with them on some of their Crawfords' projects—and when they showed me some of the scripts, I was really impressed. So, it was a question of an opportunity appearing and me leaping at it.

I have always tried to choose things I believe will make good television, and that is why I have moved away from Crawfords several times. But it's always good to come back to Crawfords, because

they have very high standards as to what they do.

My specific reason for coming back to Crawfords after *Against the Wind* was to work on *The Sullivans*, which I think is a wonderful program. Now that *Against the Wind* has finished, I consider *The Sullivans* to be the best series being done in Australia. I wish they drove back to Crawfords because I heard they were doing another 13 episodes of *Young Ramsey*. This fills me with joy, because I have always felt it is an excellent program.

There is nothing wrong with the crew at Crawfords, which is invariably made up of young people. When I first started working on *Homicide*, for example, it used to be a major logistical problem to move the crew from one location to another, because nobody was old enough to have a car license. I can also hardly recall the worst of terror that used to break out among the crew when Australia had censorship. Crew members were always worrying whether they would be killed up.

I owe Crawfords a great deal for training me, and I believe that problem has kept me to work over the years. Because I owe them that, I am always happy to go back; they are like a family. Crawfords is the place in which I grew up, and I have had many good times there. But I must stress that one of the reasons I



George Miller checks the screenplay during the filming of the highly successful television series, *Against the Wind*.



Simon Winsor (left) scribbles during the shooting of *Against the Wind*. Winsor and Miller shared the filming workload of the series.

here always kept going back to be- cause they consistently produce programs of high standard. If they started producing bad programs, I wouldn't go back.

Do producers at Crawford, such as Hector and Ian Crawford, have much say in how you shoot an episode?

They allow a lot of creative freedom — until you stuff it up. In that case you're gone. Usually they say, "Here is a script, there is the crew, and that's the amount of time we have to do it in. Now go away and do it."

Does that "creative freedom" include the right to rewrite or re-structure a script?

That scenario doesn't occur because the script they produce don't need to be rewritten. So each work has been done on a script, that most of the really terrible things have been weeded out. That's not to say that from time to time things don't go wrong. But if they do, they expect you, as director, to do what must be done: leaving it and the overall story.

I think they would be very disappointed if you suddenly rang in from location and said, "It's not working, what'll I do?"

As a director, do you notice any major differences between working on film and videotape? For example, are there no direct videotape cut a control booth, as opposed to being next to the camera on a film set?

The major difference is that film-making is much slower, but then you generally have more time. In a sense, film is also a cooler medium, where a performance, or bit of it, may have to be done several times. On videotape you look at a scene played in its entirety and can do all the cutting within a specific amount of time. The pace and intensity of performance, therefore, are fairly fixed. With film, however, you can adjust performance and pacing when you edit the thing later.

Another noticeable difference is



George Melrod speaks before an early start during filming of *High Country*.

that with film you can shoot through 360 degrees. As a result, you tend to conceive scenes in the round — actor's movements and so on. On videotape you usually conceive things at 180 degrees, because in the other side of that line are your cameras.

There is a compensating factor, however, in that you can get away with amusing cuts on videotape that you can't on film. You can't make a continuity blip, for example, because the continuity is always there. Consequently, you tend not to worry about whether things will cut together, all you have to do is press a button.

Do you primarily see yourself as a director of film or of television?

My role is that of a communicator, whether the medium. Television is the most effective means of communication in the world today. If a feature film is a ten-way success in Australia, for example, perhaps 300,000 people will have seen it. Yet one episode of *Against the Wind* reached nearly five million people.

What makes me love television is its wholesale effectiveness, com-

pared with other forms of communication. It is the most strongly visionary consumer of product, which means it will always work in response to the public. If people don't watch a program, the station will request and that program won't stay on the air. If it does work, from the station is the first to say, "Hey, that's fantastic, let's keep it going." In a way, that's why Young Ramsey is to have another series.

What is the status of the director in the Australian industry?

Australia is a fairly young country as films go. Consequently, the director doesn't have the same status as one would have in the U.S. Similarly, he may not be the highest paid member on the crew.

Directing in Australia is a poorly paid job, because you have to do a lot in a little time. Producers also have to be produced at a fraction of the cost of American television, and because of that we all have to work very efficiently.

Bromwyn Sims and Ian Jones planned "Against the Wind" as a 12-part series without a sequel, whereas "The Subways" started as a 12-week series and has been going ever since. Do you think a series should

have a definite length?

Rather than saying *The Subways* has gone on and on, I prefer to think of it as having evolved. The characters, for a start, are now quite different to what they were when they originally set out.



John Fitzgerald, cast of *Young Ramsey*, which Melrod is directing for Crawford Productions.



I have worked almost exclusively on short-run series — *Cash and Company*, *Young Ramsey*, *Against the Wind*, and the new series of *Young Ramsey* — as I can't speak with absolute knowledge of what it is like to work on a program for a couple of years. I have always slid out from under the responsibility.

Is that because you fear stagnation?

I suppose a long run could become stifling, but if it does, that stagnation will probably wind up on the screen. The ratings will then drop, and the show will be cancelled.

But there are situations which are satisfying solely in terms of one's satisfaction with a series...

If you are in a spin you do something else. Let someone else do it.

Can you do that at *Crowfoot*?

I feel I can. From time to time I work as a stills photographer as a sideline. I find that can be a great relief from directing, which is often

very stressful, and I can watch other crews and directors at work. That is very stimulating, and I come back much fresher.

Shooting stills as features also gives you a greater command of the language of cinema. It is essential to know about the focal length of lenses and what light will do because this knowledge helps you understand a cameraman's prohibitions.

On the other hand, directing is what I have been doing, and I have always seen myself as a director. I enjoy it; it is a field with unlimited scope. As society changes in Australia, so do the programs we make — and with each program change comes a rethink of your directing methods. Originally, I was an action director, now due to *Against the Wind* and *The Sullivan*, I am seen as an historical drama specialist.

The most important thing to remember, however, is that it is no good working on a program unless you really want to do it, and no good directing anything unless you believe you can make a contribution.

I was recently approached by

Tony Gervasio to direct *Thelma*. Although I was very happy at the thought of being associated with Tony, I didn't feel I could make the contribution needed for that script to become a success. So, I turned it down, which is what you must do in such circumstances.

Did you feel the script was lacking?

No. I just felt it would have been wrong for me to direct something which I didn't feel highly motivated to do. That doesn't mean to say it was a bad script, simply, it wasn't the right script for me at the time.

Have you ever thought about moving on features?

Absolutely not. I don't regard features as a step up from television. I consider myself a cameraman, and, as I have said, television is the most effective way of communicating. There are some subjects that are communicated better in the cinema, but these subjects are very few and far between.

I find television exciting. It's part of my life, and something I never want to give up. *



Filming *Against the Wind* in Inverloch. Jim English (foreground) is out in front, looking into the lens.



Tom Sullivan (Gervasio Tandy), Don Duggan (Paul White), and Norm Baker (Norman Yemm) on the set of *Thelma*, January 1981, in a scene from *The Sullivan*.



TELEVISION

The recent classification of children's television programs for transmission during the 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. time slot has brought the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal's Children's Program Committee under attack from producers, various sections of the media, and the Federation of Commercial Television Stations.

In the following article, the chairman of the Tribunal's Children's Program Committee, Dr Patrick Edgar, describes the evolution of the guidelines for the classification of children's programs, and outlines the philosophy behind them.

The Children's Program Committee, an advisory body of the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal set up in 1973, was asked to prepare guidelines for children's television, as well as classify programs specifically designed for them. The guidelines were also to set out the type of advertising to be shown during the programs.

In July 1977, the Tribunal's Self-Regulation Report had recommended that a new classification — "C" for children — be instituted, and that

only material classified "C" be televised between 4 p.m. and 5 p.m. on weekdays.

The Committee's terms of reference were:

1. To assess public opinion and research with a view to developing a consistent philosophy upon which guidelines and classifications for children's programming may be used.

2. To formulate guidelines for:

(a) programs to be televised during periods, as determined by the Tribunal, when only material specifically designed for children may be presented;

(b) advertising and program promotions to be televised during the "C" classified time zone; and

(c) pro-social messages to be televised during kindergarten programs.

3. To classify, in terms of each guideline:

(a) programs proposed for "C" classification;

(b) advertisements proposed for "C" classification; and

(c) pro-social messages proposed for kindergarten programs.

In view of the concern expressed by many sources, the Committee decided that children's programs should improve as soon as possible. Consequently, its most urgent task was to formulate requirements for televising "C" classified programs after 4 p.m.

As a result of public inquiries by the Tribunal, and the general interest in the subject, there was a great deal of material entered on the expectations and criticisms of children's programming. The Committee, therefore, decided to find out how it could help in the production of worthwhile programs. It agreed that children's programs needed some kind of protection from competitive programs, such as cartoons and family-oriented imported material, if the long-term goals of the public and the producers were to be realized.

It was also apparent that producers would welcome access to research material and advice to help them refine their concepts and techniques. It was clear that many inexperienced producers would be entering this field in



Sally's Neighbourhood on HSV-2's Super Neighbourhood classified "C".



The Tweenies Film Corporation's Tweenies and Georgie classified "C".



NWV's Cubby's New classified "C".

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AUSTRALIAN FILM PRODUCER: PART 16

AN INTRODUCTION TO FILM MERCHANDISING

In this 16th part of a 17-part series, *Cinema Agents* contributing editor Antony J. Ginnane, and writers Ian Bellina and Leon Gorr discuss merchandising techniques and practices associated with the production and release of a feature film.

Introduction

Traditionally, film merchandising activities have performed two main functions. Firstly, they have been seen as an adjunct to the marketing and advertising of a film and, secondly, through the exploitation of ancillary rights, they have contributed to a film's income. Until recently, however, the income-earning potential of merchandising activities has not been fully exploited, and a film's primary spin-offs — books and soundtrack — have been used primarily for promotional purposes.

In the past three years this position has changed markedly. First, not only the producers of hit movies like *Saturday Night Fever* and *Grease*, but also the makers of every type of product from *Star Wars* to the *Jarvis* Band films, are engaged in the exploitation of ancillary rights. The major studios have moved into an area which had previously been explored only by Disney Studios and a few independent producers; and which, in Australia, had only been taken advantage of by the Reg Grundy Organisation (with their Australian-made joint venture *Albino*) and the South Australian Film Corporation (with the merchandising of *Smoke Day* and *Blue Fire*).

New areas of merchandising have rapidly been developed by producers, and have yielded profits which, in certain instances (for example *Star Wars*), exceeded the revenue derived from the initial theatrical release of the film.

Traditional Merchandising

Traditionally, two terms have been the object of film merchandising. Firstly, merchandising relating to the literary basis of the film, the screenplay, and secondly, merchandising relating to the musical basis of the film, the soundtrack.

(1) The Screenplay

In his screenplay contract with the writer, a producer should have acquired all ancillary rights related to the script, either as an outright buy or on some profit-sharing arrangement with the writer. Then, either directly or through a literary agent, the producer will approach various publishing houses to secure interest in either:

- (a) a conclusion of the film script;
- (b) the publication of the screenplay itself (if the film is from a play, or has other serious literary merit);
- (c) the publication of a new edition of the book on which the screenplay is based (a soft-cover or hard-back, featuring scenes from the film on either jacket or cover);
- (d) the publication of a picture book, featuring the drawings of the film or stills from it, or;
- (e) combinations of the above.

Normally, the publisher will pay the producer an advance against royalties and a percentage of profits once the royalty has been received — which differs according to the manner in which the book is released. The publisher may secure worldwide rights to publication, although it is probably better for Australia producers to negotiate non-Australian rights, as foreign distributors, particularly American distributors, may want to include exhibition rights in their license agreements. In any event, American and European publishers will often pay twice as much for novelisation rights as Australian publishers do for world rights. A typical advance by an Australian publisher for novelisation rights varies between \$1700 and \$4000, depending on the length of the material.

The producer who assigns literary rights to a publisher should ensure that the book's cover, and/or jacket, features the film's logo and other artwork. It may also be possible to arrange for the publisher to spend a certain amount of money to launch the book, and for the book's advertising to promote the film. In general, the more cross-plugging of the book and the film, the better.

(2) The Music and the Soundtrack

As previously noted, except for musicals, the intrinsic value of a soundtrack recording is seriously limited, and the importance of an LP to a producer lies in the promotional applications. Frequently, the producer will license the film's soundtrack to a record company, forfeiting a cash advance for a percentage of sales revenue, in return for the recording company advancing the cost of producing an album. In this instance, the producer should ensure that the film's logo, artwork, and other promotional material are featured on the record sleeve. The producer should also ensure that he has made a suitable arrangement with the composer of the film's soundtrack for royalties received from the sale of an LP. Frequently Australia's composers will have a 'residuals' clause in their contracts.

In Europe, producers frequently do not include the costs of recording the soundtrack in the film's budget because the composer's

record company will pay all costs in return for a license deal on publishing and other rights. Some European composers (for example, Ennio Morricone and Francis Lai) have as much influence over their records as on the basis of their names alone.

Recently, the joint promotion of *Saturday Night Fever* and its LP involved the film's trailer playing the album. This sort of cross-over between the cinema and recording industries promises to become a permanent feature of film and record exploitation.

New Merchandising Areas

Many new merchandising areas have been opened up recently, and one of the most significant has been licensing. At a steady pace, Walt Disney Productions and a number of independent houses explored the area from one to next, often with great success. In Australia, the Reg Grundy Organisation, and others, have approached producers for the right to exploit various merchandising activities. To the outside knowledge, as merchandiser has just any Australian producer an advance upfront, and with the exception of *Albino*, large sums have not been received.

In general, the merchandiser attempts to sell characters or exploitable elements in a film to clients whose sales targets tie-in with the film's intended audience. Everything from games, toys, and clothing are designed reflecting to various aspects of the film. Licenses may advance to exploit these characters too, and the merchandiser takes a commission of between 15 and 40 per cent of sales revenue.

The producer's agreement with the merchandiser should provide for the producer to be advised of all commercial exploitation which is in progress, and to approve or disapprove of any proposed licenses. It should also provide that any artists created under license featuring the film should be of a high standard in quality and appearance.

It is unlikely, however, that Australian producers will receive large sums from merchandising activities until they become involved in larger scale international productions.

The Future

American film producers involved in high budget productions are now sharing their principles to include merchandising elements in the story and screenplay, and merchandising organizations are buying rights to suitable films and television series now in production. It is likely that the 1980s will see income from merchandising become a new source of sales finance. ■

1. With the exception of *Grease*, the *Sound of Music*, where the soundtrack has been fully exploited.



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Top: Morant and Handcock are executed by the British. Below: Morant, Woodhouse and Handcock are in the North African desert.



Morant (Edward Woodhouse) leads a mounted attack against the Boers.

CAST		CREW	
Lt. Harry Morant	Edward Woodhouse	Producer	Neil Carroll
Lt. Peter Handcock	Raymond Stange	Director	Bruce Beresford
Lt. George Watson	Lorne Foss-Gentle	Script	Jonathan Hardy
Major Thomas	Jack Thompson	Costume Designer	David Stevens
Major Smith	Karl Mollath	Photographer	Tim McKeown
Capt. Taylor	John Wood	Editor	Bill Ashdown
Lord Kitchener	Alan Cress	Art Director	David Capping



The delicate captain, Australian soldier Major Thomas (Jack Thompson) debates Watson (Lorne Foss-Gentle) while Morant (Edward Woodhouse) and Handcock (Raymond Stange) look on.



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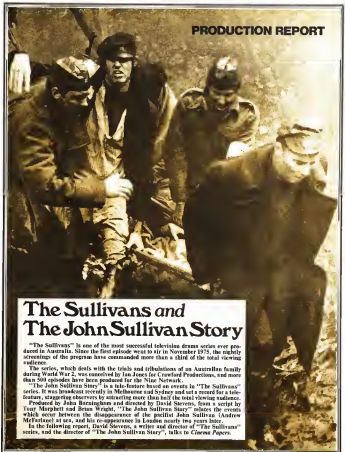
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PRODUCTION REPORT

The Sullivans and The John Sullivan Story

"The Sullivans" is one of the most successful television drama series ever produced in Australia. Since the first episode went to air in November 1975, the nightly screenings of the program have commanded more than a third of the total viewing audience.

The series, which deals with the trials and tribulations of an Australian family during World War 2, was conceived by Ian Jones for Crawford Productions, and more than 500 episodes have been produced for the Nine Network.

"The John Sullivan Story" is a tele-feature based on events in "The Sullivans" series. It was broadcast recently in Melbourne and Sydney and set a record for a tele-feature, staggering observers by attracting more than half the total viewing audience.

Produced by John Birmingham and directed by David Stevens, from a script by Tony Marshall and Brian Wright, "The John Sullivan Story" relates the events which occur between the disappearance of the pacifist John Sullivan (Andrew McFarlane) at sea, and his re-appearance in London nearly two years later.

In the following report, David Stevens, a writer and director of "The Sullivans" series, and the director of "The John Sullivan Story," talks to *Cinema Papers*.

DAVID STEVENS

WRITER/DIRECTOR

Writing

When I first heard about *The Sullivan*, a pilot script had been written and was being handled around the television stations. At this stage the channels were unwilling to invest a large amount of money in what was, really, a radical departure for Australian television series.

Eventually Channel 9 came in, and the producer, Henry Crawford, asked me if I would write for the series. I agreed, and within a week I met Ben Jones, who was the major creative force at that stage, Jack Blair, who co-wrote the experimental pilot, and the other three writers. I was given the second episode, *The Dedication of War*, to write — which was the first after the pilot.

How many episodes were planned?

There was a contract for 13 weeks — 63 episodes.

How far ahead were you writing?

About four months ahead of the start of production.

Was the entire series planned before you began, or did it evolve from episode to episode?

It was really only planned in detail for the first six. On a series you usually find that the person who conceived the program regards it very much as his baby, and in the early stages has a very firm idea of how he wants it to go. It's a bit like a dog before the script, except the person at the helm usually isn't the person who is going to direct it.

Gradually, however, as ideas ran out, or people are replaced, there is much greater freedom. Now, I regard writing *The Sullivan* as one of the major joys of being a dramatist in Australia, because if you can persuade the script editor and story editor into an idea, then you can usually think about almost any concept. I have discussed death, for example, in quite detailed terms in *The Sullivan*. I even did a sort of Norman Lindsay pastiche involving the character of Geoff, played by James Hyman, and it turned out to be one of the favorite episodes I had written.

How much research goes into writing an episode of "The Sullivan"?

A great deal. We get a monthly

David Stevens' career began on the stage in Britain, where he worked as an actor, director, and impresario before migrating to New Zealand in 1944.

He joined the New Zealand Broadcasting Commission to become a producer of radio drama, then moved into television where he soon established himself as one of the leading directors in the country.

In 1972, Stevens was invited to join Crawford Productions in Australia, and after directing "Homicide", he turned to writing. He has since written more than 60 hours of drama, including episodes of "Homicide", "Division 4", "Matlock Police", "The Box", and "The Sullivan", and a feature film script from the play *Breaker Morant*, for the South Australian Film Corporation.

He has also directed "The Sullivan", as well as episodes of "The Box" and "Number 96", and the telefeatures, "Roses Bloom Twice", and "The John Sullivan Story".

Stevens and long-time associate Henry Crawford have formed a production company, Mariner Films, and are now working on a television series based on Nevil Shute's *A Town Like Alice*.

Stevens was interviewed in Melbourne by Peter Bellamy shortly after the Nine Network broadcast "The John Sullivan Story". In this interview, he talks about writing and directing "The Sullivan", and the making of "The John Sullivan Story".



David Stevens (center) directing Peter Pivick and Frank Collier in *The John Sullivan Story*.

book which gives us all the trivia of daily life for that corresponding month in the year. The episodes I am writing now are set in 1944, and from the book I can find out how much mushrooms cost at the market, what was on in the cinema, what type cars were, what was in the newspapers... all the trivia of daily life you need to know if you are writing about people. Most people's lives are expressed in trivia, while our innermost thoughts are preoccupied with the "deep" things in life — which we don't reveal to anybody — we run around worrying whether we have enough money to pay the train fare home, or whether there is a film we want to see. These trivial things are what a writer must know about, or try to imagine.

Is much freedom taken with the actual historical situation?

Sometimes. In *The John Sullivan Story*, for example, the actual Yugoslav political situation was so complicated that to present it as a believable arena would have been virtually impossible. And because I believe that drama is not documentary and that it is made for people, I felt it was necessary to reduce the political situation to its essentials — as it affected John Sullivan. I think this is the only line to take unless one is going to make a documentary series like *The World at War*. I am concerned with how my characters are the situation subjective drama as opposed to objective drama.

How does an individual script for "The Sullivan" evolve?

A writer is usually contracted to do two episodes — which is the maximum lead a writer can carry at any one time and will be kept reasonably ahead. Once the script is commissioned a plotting meeting is held with the producer, the story editor, two or three script editors, and a researcher if necessary, and the story is thrashed out.

Depending on the set or want of the writer, he can either put all three and not cut a general story line with the others, or, if he has a story which he really wants to tell, he can take over and say, "That's the story I want to tell, that's what I'm going to do", and if it's good they'll say, "Terrific, go and do it."

Once the story is agreed upon it is usually hammered into a two-page form by one of the script editors — probably the person who

will edit it. Then the writer is given a week to 10 days to write a scene breakdown, which is what he plans to do with the story in a structural form. This will then be looked around by the script editors, and if they have any major objections they will voice them then. If they feel the writer hasn't fulfilled what he originally set out to do, they will comment on it. The writing usually takes me about two weeks — although once it took eight weeks, and another time three days.

The script and story editors appear to play a key role in developing a script —

Largely because of the volume of material being developed. The system we use was perfected by the BBC, the greatest television production house in the world, and I think you will find that until the austral theory road at hand, it was also used on films — only the role of the script editor wasn't credited. The BBC really took an on-air system and developed it.

The function of the script editor is a very important one, and I am convinced that the scripts of several Australian films could have been easily improved if a devoted script editor had been working on them. But then you run smack into the sector theory. I think one of the major difficulties between film and television is that it is very hard to make television an ego trip, because there are too many people picking your ego all along the line.

Is it common for a producer to request changes to a script once it is completed?

If he feels it's necessary. A director may also request changes. I have been very fortunate with my producers and directors, and very seldom has a script of mine been changed. But I also think a writer can't have the ability to evaluate the merit of his own work, although I would never want to be without a script editor — just as a novel can never work without a story editor.

In a recent interview Ian Coughlan said he thought this was one of the greatest Australian serials, like "The Restless Years", were so successful because of the strength of the characters. Do you agree?

Yes. I think it's true of all good drama. Basically, people are interested in people. We are constantly told that audiences only want action on television, and in the days of the police shows there was very heavy pressure to make them as action-filled as possible, but in fact, the legal-action series aren't nearly as popular as the people series.

Do you think weak characteriza-



The Sullivan family in Cavallini Productions' long-running television series *The Sullivan Family*.

tion in a New is Australian feature films?

Yes. Most people who are involved in feature films in this country have absolutely no training in drama. There is a vast difference between shaping a one-minute commercial and shaping a 90-minute drama. There is also a great deal of difficulty dividing an actor in a one-minute commercial and shaping a performance over 90 minutes.

Is the development of a character any easier in a series which continues week after week?

If you are dead lucky. But whether a series is a pole or not is governed by the quality of the first episodes, so you have to define at least some aspects of a character very quickly — as you must do in a feature film.

Are there any freelance writers who create characters as audience will respond to immediately?

None at all. Although there is an organization in the U.S. which demand a whole series using a computer programmed with details on all the series which had been successful in the past. But so far as I am concerned, there is no guarantee that what has been successful in the past will succeed in the future, as audience is always attracted by the new and vibrant.

Have you devised characters which get hated? worked, and had to be eliminated?

Yes.

How do you know when the audience isn't responding to such a character?

You sense it very quickly. You decide what you think is an exciting character, everybody has a ball for



Peter Crook (left) and Jack Long (right) in the Sullivan family.

the first script or two, then suddenly everybody stops writing for that character. They are given words to say, but they are meaningless. Then there is a desperate attempt to put life back into the character, but it becomes clear that the actor actually lacks dramatic confidence — and that's what writers need, conflict upon conflict upon conflict.

Some characters serve a wonderful function for a period, but then they cease to do so, and unless a new situation creates a new function, they stagnate.

Are there many variations on the subject matter in "The Sullivan's"?

Naturally. They often touched on homosexuality in "The Sullivan's", which is not a subject which would have been readily acceptable to someone in Canberra at that time. But it was dealt with lightly and with great taste. I think an audience that has been exposed to *The Box* and *Number 96* can cope with anything.

The reason I work in television is because I reach a mass audience. I can put across messages, however sophisticated. If you treat the audience as intelligent, which you can in a long way, but if you think you can give them the lowest crap and get away with it, then you are insulting the audience and your own work.

Why do you think "The Sullivan's" has been so successful?

One of the most important ingredients of success in television — or in films — is timing, and *The Sullivan's* was perfectly timed. When the first episode (it) we were in an economic depression, which, for many people, was the most severe financial crisis since World War 2. They were being thrown a lifeline in a situation they could relate to: recession, war, economic crisis. I also think that within the

development of Australian film and television it was the first one that period had been touched upon. In features, we had the initial success with sex comedies like *Alma Purple* and *Bunny McKenna*; it proved we could make films people wanted to see. Then the audience wanted to know more about their past. And the historical films that were made were necessary for the audience to catch up on its own past, which it had always been denied on film or television. Gradually the past came back, and now we have crises for contemporary material, and the audience is ready for it.

The Seven Network uses a program evaluation service called TAPE, to test audience reaction to a script. Has this ever been done at Cronkite's?

Seven has the prerogative on TAPE in this country, and I don't think there is an equivalent organization used by the Nine Network. There are a lot of arguments for and against TAPE. I think any comment on a script is worthwhile if it comes from people you respect. TAPE has made some very strange decisions though. They said *Solo* (Gus' mother) was, and the channel believed them. But when it was to air it got an astronomical cost for a 7 o'clock Friday night time slot.

I believe "The Sullivan's" went into production without a pilot episode being made, which meant it was selected before going to air....

Yes. But pilots are a problem now. It's very expensive to make a pilot, and the risks have to be amortized across the entire series, which can't always be done. And by the time a pilot is made and the audience is tested, it can be nine months before it all comes together again. GTV-8 had the very same aim to realize the problems a pilot

presented for *The Sullivans*, so it gave the go-ahead without one.

Directing

Did you write any of the episodes of "The Sullivans" you directed?

No, they have been from other people's scripts.

Have you ever been tempted to re-write or re-shape them?

Yes. It's the director who has to make it on the floor and make it work. I always try to go on the floor totally satisfied that the script I am working from is viable, and the last thing I will do, if I can possibly avoid it, is change one line of the dialogue while I am directing.

Do you encounter any difficulties being only one of four or five people directing episodes of a series?

Not really. When I am given a script to direct — either my own or someone else's — I concentrate on that particular story. I divine what the essence of it is, and treat it as a film in its own right, the fact that other directors work on other episodes doesn't affect what I do.

Is there collaboration between the directors of a series like "The Sullivans"?

Well, in the case of *Homicide* which I was very intimately associated in, Paul Eddley, just Austin and I knew each other very well, but we never actually sat down and said, "Right, what is the policy line we're taking?" We knew our personalities would be reflected in the episodes we did, and left it at that. The same is true of writers. There are writers with whom I will discuss aspects of *The Sullivans*, and writers I won't.

Television series like "The Sullivans" still use a mixture of film and videotape. Do you find it difficult switching between the two media?

Yes, it's a problem because the two things just don't match. Nobody has ever found a way to make them match, and nobody ever will.

There is a strong move in Britain now for a program to be shot either completely on film, or on videotape. I think that's the only answer.

What are the main differences between working on film and videotape?

The different look of film and tape is the main thing. That one, at best, is treated to the fact that television generally uses three cameras, and film only one. When you are lighting for three cameras simultaneously, it's harder than



John Sullivan (Andrew McFarlane) and Nedra Mason (Vera Farmis) in *The John Sullivan Story*

killing for one. However, I seldom work with three-camera setups. I tend to use video like film, and edit in my room during the cutting. On the other hand, doing a seven or eight-minute scene with multiple cameras on videotape is one damn sweep is wonderful for the actor. You can feel the action of the performance going across, and this is very difficult to get on film.

Given the tight shooting schedules on a series like "The Sullivans", do you find you have to sacrifice rehearsal time with actors?

The rehearsal time with videotape is minimal, but there is one

Is there a tendency to cast character actors who require less rehearsal?

That's the lowest common denominator. If you are going to break down a performance on your first presents to you, then you have to be damn certain you have enough time to build it up again. For simplicity, one will always cast the obvious, but we try and avoid this — although it's not always possible.

Are you always closely involved with the casting?

Totally. This is one of my firm agreements with my manager: I walk for. There are some actors who are very good, and I can work with, and some I can't. There are also actors who are considered not so good, but whom I can work with

example, *The John Sullivan Story* is a reasonably major event — in terms of the money spent on it if nothing else. And yet there has not been what I would call one serious review of it, one intelligent, high-minded evaluation of the film. If it had been a feature film, there would have been very few articles devoted to its finer points. But reading some of the reviews I did get, it would seem that *Hector Crawford* not only wrote and directed it, but also financed it and played most of the parts.

The problems are all wrong. *The Age* in Melbourne, for example, does not have a television review column half as serious as most will have for books, theatre or film.

I think most critics look at television expecting it to be mediocre, so you start off with a disadvantage. Whereas with a feature film the critics generally go wanting it to be good, they will accept a lot of punishment before they decide it is not. It's part of the double standard that seems to exist.

I have no idea why people hold these attitudes. We are changing of the protest medium in this world for showing the way people think — for more than film — but our commentators remain critical attitudes.

There is a sort of middle-class apathy about television. I can remember the early days when many upper-middle-class families refused to have television in their homes. It may be a hangover from those days.

The John Sullivan Story

How did the idea of a tele-feature from "The Sullivans" come about?

Well, Lorraine Kelly, who plays Grace Sullivan, wanted to go away for a while, and, in writing out ways of writing her out of the series, it seemed like a good idea to resolve the question of what had happened to John Sullivan in the period between the shipwreck and his sudden appearance in London.



John Sullivan (Andrew McFarlane) and Nedra Mason (Vera Farmis) in *The John Sullivan Story*



John Sullivan (Andrew McFarlane) and Nedra Mason (Vera Farmis) in *The John Sullivan Story*

So, Brian Wright was asked to do a four-page summation of what could have happened, given that he had disappeared in the Eastern Mediterranean. It was terrific, everybody liked it, and so it was presented to the Network. They too liked it, and it snowballed from there.

I didn't come into it until much later. I was working on a feature called *The Two of Me*, which fell through and I went to Los Angeles for a while. Hector played me and asked if I was interested in coming back to direct a tele-feature based on *The Sullivan*, and I said yes.

When I came back, Tedy Monger's first draft had been completed and was about to be edited. I read it and liked it, although I had reservations about shooting it in the scheduled three, five-day weeks!

Was it conceived as a big budget feature?

No, I don't think so. It probably wouldn't have happened if they thought it was going to be expensive. It was conceived as being a hole out of the ordinary though. Everyone thought it was a farce, and something that should be done. This is one of the great beauties of working in *Crawford*—when Hector thinks it's a good thing, he will sign along with it, and give you a great deal of freedom.

Was there more freedom working on the tele-feature than on the series?

Yes, though on the series he exercises greater influence. But on the tele-feature, he just played one out right and said, "Well, okay, you have the scene, now take over the camera."

Did you have a long pre-production period?

Good grief, we started work as it was in the beginning of February, and commenced shooting towards the end of March. So we had eight weeks to get the whole thing together—from completed script to the first day of shooting.

That's not much time, compared to an average feature film...

That's the nature of the advantages of working with an organization like *Crawford*. It's a very sophisticated structure that allows you to do things quickly and efficiently.

Was "The John Sullivan Story" conceived as an extended episode of the series, or did you want to be different?

I don't believe it necessarily would have helped it in any way. An audience responds to something that is individual, not something that is the same. If *The John Sullivan Story* had looked like three episodes of *The Sullivan* done together, it wouldn't have had the same impact.

I approach new work, and see it for what I believe it to be. I take it from that point. That's the only way I can work. This is probably why I have not made a feature film. On the three occasions I agreed to direct features, I have listened to the producers' point of view and tried to correlate that to the script, then said, "Well, I think it should go this way," and we have parted ways.

So you find it easier to work in a more collaborative atmosphere—like at *Crawford*?

Yes. I don't have the sort of ego that can play the politics that is necessary to get a feature film off the ground. I think I would have functioned very well under the old Hollywood studio system. When a whole stack of films is being produced you don't have the place that one-off feature filmmaking is exposed to. I think the pressure of a lot of feature filmmakers is under them from the right to make mistakes—which is the right of every artist.

In television, there is so much scope for experiment and improvisation. You can do an improvisation work, an improvisation work, or a narrative work. A lot of people in the Australian film

industry are saying that filmmakers have a perfect standard before they do anything else as far as I am concerned. I want through that a long time ago.

Did you ever think of making actors with less-off an appeal in "The John Sullivan Story"?

No, because I don't believe there is any wish thing. There's not one Australian actor who actually gets better on sets on the strength of his or her name. In fact, I don't think there is such a thing as a guaranteed financial success in the world.

And I am glad there weren't any pressures put on me to use "name" actors, because I may not have found Vera Farmiga who played Nedra.

You said earlier that when you get a script you drive the essence of the story, and mould the way you direct around that. What did you see as the essence of "The John Sullivan Story"?

When I first heard of *The John Sullivan Story* I thought, it was going to be a great war epic and far a while my thinking was along those lines. I thought of doing things like using war footage showing the Yugoslavians arriving, attacking across the snow, and cutting in our own close-ups. Then one night I applied my own fairly rigid rules and decided it was simply about John Sullivan. It was about the war seen from his point of view, he wouldn't see 20,000 people, only the group immediately around him.

So basically, it was about a pacifist caught up in the war, involving concepts of humanity and religion. If it had been a true story, John Sullivan may well have been executed because the qualities he displays seemed to me to be the true staff units are made of.

Although the story is set in the thick of the war, there is only a couple of fighting scenes. Was the amount of action restricted by the budget?

No. People are basically interested in people, and a large part of the audience watching *The John Sullivan Story* is interested in the action only in the extent that it affects the control, character. It's like a war dance. I have never been moved to laughter or tears by a war, but I can be moved to great concern and compassion about the person in the war.

So, in *The John Sullivan Story* we concentrated on developing the characters, and never considered the action in terms of other than how it related to John Sullivan's disappearance. For example there is a scene where the Patton army, in the aftermath of the Nazi attack, which I felt was necessary, dramatically, after the big 'up' of the

attack and before the retreat, is not in mood for the victorious scene between John Sullivan (Andrew McFarlane) and Stiers (Frank Gaskin), in which you can very much about they because you have seen what they have been through.

There is quite a mixture of language in the story—Yugoslavian, English and German. Why did you decide to do that rather than subtitle?

I think I must have had more concern about the accent problem than any other aspect of the film. I made up my mind fairly early in the piece about how we should handle it. I had looked at most of the films and how New York Hollywood dealt with it then, and frankly, it seemed to me to be the most accessible way to do it. The whole point of acting is there is to tell the story in the simplest way creating the greatest effect on the audience. Subtitled are distracting, they really belong to documentaries.

Andrew McFarlane's performance in the film is very powerful—

I have known Andrew since he first came out of NIDA, and he has developed into one of the best actors in the world. He now has the technical equipment to do just about anything he wants.

In the sequence where he gives himself up to the Germans, the gut feeling breaks through all his technique, just his technique goes into the discipline to carry on some, even though outside the man is breaking. He holds off-camera at the end of that shot and we freeze frame. In fact, what happened was that he came off-camera, fell into my arms and just cried for about three or four minutes—and not one of the crew at one thought it was enough to see the man in his crying in another man's arms.

Andrew's part in the film is an extremely difficult one because he doesn't have any violent outbursts. And yet he has to maintain audience interest and the credibility of the character.

Many of the scenes in "The John Sullivan Story" are quite violent. Were you restricted in the depiction of violent events?

Violence is a difficult thing—like the subject of sex—because what is suggested is often far more powerful than what is said. The audience's imagination deeply disturbs a number of people, but in fact, all you see is a rather well-made-up leg, and everything else is left to your imagination. The effect is completely by implication. In the big Nazi or attack, you don't see anybody get killed, but it's an extremely violent scene.

There are two shots in the film I was asked to change—one was edited altogether and the other



Top: The role of The John Sullivan Story



Out of the spectacular action sequence in the 50-minute The John Sullivan Story

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Film Reviews

The Last of the Knucklemen

Kath Connolly

Australia represented an explosion of cinematic talent in days past, but a little ahead of its film renaissance. By the time our cinema was liberated upon the beach, little playwrights like David Williamson, Alexander Elliot, Jack Kirkland, John Romeril and Dorothy Hewett's to name only the first runners) were shaking the stage with truth, social insights into contemporary Australia life.

Late of this dramatic nurturing has reached the screen. Nobody wants to see Australian film exempted to productions deemed as the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences propensity to do "home-movie material", but a bit pity that, as for one film like *Jackie* represents being Tim Jeffries' *The Australian* and Bruce Beresford's *King of the Hill*, both by Williamson, and John Duigan's expanded version of

Richard O'Sullivan's *Love Is the Only Game* of quality material available.

This is a well-meaning failure that not approaches the *Burrows* a reference of John Brown's body, though limited, *The Last of the Knucklemen*. The three-part drama, set in a small town during the 1940s, tells the story of the battle to control Australia's economy, but it's missing enough action to make a movie, although it's depicted as the last act of the rough-hewn gang wars. (Conspicuously though, it not includes any mention of the Japanese invasion, the sophisticated Melbourne spring night would be rounded in Japan cinema as *YFJ*).

On the line of a *Don*, *The Last of the Knucklemen* is clearly aimed to *Burrows* proven history for becoming the Australian male cinema in all his prime roughness (Black, Fanning, Abba, Pappas). Too shorty perhaps, and little other than the film shows the superficial members of the play into comic book books.

Burrows's screenplay is surprisingly laid out in the secondary and not part of the original but the film's trouble lies not in

much in the script as in the tenacity with which it almost every necessary point to pass for the dramatic people. The story told in the steadily elemental approach help prove the point. The bad thing is the film is a high-stakes card game between Michael (Michael O'Sullivan), a rich old gambler and Pappas (Abba Pappas) the only winner — characters present a greater dimension to *Burrows*'s complexity (and very well played).

When Michael's — the film, also, is the rule in a way, given a more kind of perfect reality — maintains the limited meaning, audience only to see them. It's hard to see how the film goes in spirit and substance.

By comparison the other characters are not of *Torres* (Glenard Knuckles), the legendary toughness of the film, are possibly more than just direct. *Torres* is the one because a family presence of the film, a special little drama in the background of the personality and sensibility of the film's physical presence. As Michael explains to *Torres* (Michael Knuckles) the film's focus on rules of

"the old days" when the off-off had to be held in secret by men good with their fists. But very much the film does *Torres* enough to call attention to the apparently non-existent crowd now display a new solidarity (when the film first is told). "Any of the bullets about all for one and one for all and for the best down the road. This was General Motors or BMW? You're all there on a white line."

One mistake in the film is the lack of a lot more the women are there. One like Gayle (Lynne) who has been down down to the last point.

One mistake in the film is the lack of a lot more the women are there. One like Gayle (Lynne) who has been down down to the last point.

The *Burrows* *The Last of the Knucklemen*, a smaller film in which *Burrows* has become *King of the Hill* and *King of the Hill*.



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The Newsletter

Continued from P. 496

when she moved from inside out into the real parties. This meant I didn't have the fidelity going in and out that I wanted.

Still, I was very pleased with the amount of movement I got into the film. A wheelchair is a wonderful thing, especially if it's a lovely red one, and I was able to experiment with many interesting moves.

Several critics felt the ending was too obvious by making Mark (John Waters) so patently the murderer, one knew it had to be the other...

Look at how the film opens. We begin by showing our brother killing a hitz-bitch. The key thing was that there were two cars, of the same make and upholstery, but with different exterior colors. Now, we never show the face of the murderer, we just show the face of the girl. After he slaps her with the broken mirror, we then get to Mark, sitting at the house of a similar car. So, he looks suspiciously like the murderer. Then, by the time we show her driving in the car, the audience is absolutely convinced he is guilty. Once we've established he is the murderer, therefore, the tension of the drama is what as going to happen when Robert (George Milburn) finds out what Mark has done. And once he has to let Mark know he knows, what will Mark do in his? Will he kill him?

Then there are the cops. Their line of questioning is to the brother who is 'guilty'. Now the other, who is apparently innocent, appears to be protecting Mark from the cops. At all the same time appears to be lying on. So, not only are the cops playing a kind of cat-and-mouse game, but so is Robert.

When we introduce the film, only two people out of 100 appeared to who was the murderer in the first 20 minutes of the film. Their explanation was that they wouldn't accept the obvious. A few others also started to twig at Robert being guilty during the film, but for my money, a didn't realize if people twigged at that late stage.

How successful was the film?

It has had better success, no one can't really count it a success. It is No. 14 or 15, and did about as well as *Deeply Phlegmatic*.

The film cost more than we budgeted. I originally budgeted it at about \$250,000, but it finally cost \$290,000.

The film rated very highly on television. Was it perhaps a subject that could have been done as a television film, and on a lower budget?

In some ways I would have preferred to make it a tele-feature

for \$135,000, but there is no way of telling if we would have got the same result. If I had made it for television, I could have picked up \$60,000 at most from a television station and perhaps \$25,000 from Bruce Gordon at Paramount. Now, that only gives you \$115,000 — i.e., a deficit of \$80,000.

Are we making a lot of tele-features on feature budgets?

Yes, and the reason is that it is often easier to get the money to make a \$400,000 feature film than a \$135,000 tele-feature. Distributors are not feature films and, at this juncture, television stations aren't very open to independent packages of tele-features.

Because a producer's salary is usually linked to a budget, the higher the cost the more the producer gets. Some commentators have suggested this affects budget producers to go for high budgets...

That is a cynical interpretation, but it is probably true in a couple of cases. I do certainly think of a few. But a more important influence is the way our government corporation work. They reason that although one is likely to lose \$400,000 of a \$600,000 budget, there is still the chance that one can make the \$400,000. On the \$135,000 tele-feature, as I said before, you are bound to lose at least \$30,000. Now for my money, I would be making many more tele-features, taking them for the risk and winning out of \$60,000 a film. We would save not just a lot of film-makers, and at a cheaper cost.

On the other hand one of the things we need to do is raise the standards in television, and the feature film industry is doing that. It is giving people the chance to spend the right amount of time on rehearsing or make up, special effects, etc.

Eliza Fraser

"Eliza Fraser" is your most expensive film. What was its budget?

Two weeks before the planned start on January 2, 1975, the budget was \$750,000. The APC had invested \$187,000, I owned another \$187,000, and Henshaw had put in the rest. There was a meeting of the Henshaw Board — and it was the new board, Walcott and Coppock having pulled out — it was felt that an international film needed international stars. I had planned to make the film with Wendy Hughes, but Henshaw said no, and I flew to New Zealand to meet Charlotte Rampling on Christmas Day, 1975. But I wasn't keen on using her as I didn't think she was a comedy actress. As it turned out, I couldn't find a

star until six weeks later, on February 11. This deficit cost \$50,000, because Len Henshaw had already started construction of the sets and so on. We then had to re-cut the budget, and allow for our top story — *Sensational York* who cost \$125,000, Trevor Howard \$48,000, and John Cusack \$32,000. This meant more than \$200,000 on foreign stars alone. Consequently, the revised budget became \$750,000 plus \$50,000 and \$200,000 — i.e., \$1 million. In the end, the film cost \$1,200,000, which was 30 per cent over budget. This is about the percentage I went over on *Bad Play*. The budget on this started at \$244,000, rose to \$260,000 and finished at \$294,000.

Up until 1975, budgets were quite reasonable. But then things started to give you an idea, let's look at what I paid the actors, though one could do the same exercise with technicians, equipment charges, etc. In March 1971, when I did *Shark*, everybody was paid \$200 a week. By the time *Shark*, Howard was up to \$500 a week. For *Piercing*, Jack Thompson was on \$1000 a week. By the time we did *Alvin Karpis*, Alvin Karpis had also got \$2000 a week. For *Bad Play* George Milburn got \$1400 a week and John Waters \$1000, but by *Eliza Fraser* we were on \$7500. Of course, \$2000 a week is enormous, compared to paying Trevor Howard \$48,000 for 12 days' work, but it gives you an idea of the escalating costs in one area of filmmaking.

Apparently there was discussion at Henshaw over what sort of film "Eliza" should be...

It is true that the script changed a lot from the original, but I was behind that. Originally, I had intended the film to be a kind of *Radiohead* — i.e., three victims of the incident told by three different people. But, when Williamson and I worked on it more, we felt *Eliza* should become more a comic

figure. She was essentially a cool woman, and I thought the possibilities for satire were great.

Looking back with the wisdom of hindsight, looking on history is not what *Australians* are into at present. I think the public would have preferred to have seen "a real noble history", rather than a comic interpretation. This is probably because we are a young country. One can, for instance, study even up 18th Century British history because there have been numerous satirical interpretations, and the public is ready to see something different.

I saw *Eliza* as a prototype poster like *Monty Python's Flying Circus*, or any of these 18th Century pastiche novels. I wanted to emphasize the ridiculous quality of it. I saw our black sense of humor is very 18th Century, and there are ways in which the crude order, with its terrible sense of humor, is very close to the John Bull Englishman of the 18th Century.

Now, since the press realized a million dollars was being spent on a period film, they aggressively saw it as a serious epic. I would regret that I was late in the fact that it was a comedy, but no matter what I said, the press made everybody's expectations.

I think the film was mainly misunderstood, but not by the public. After all, it is my second most successful film. It grossed something like \$1.2 million, and recovered about \$400,000. If we had made it for \$750,000, as originally planned, we would nearly have been in the clear by now.

The obvious question is, would it still have grossed \$1.2 million without *Sensational York*?

I don't know, but I believe it would have. One thing I am certain of, though, is that you should never make an *Eliza Fraser* or a *Josette Blacksmith* without an overseas partner. There are two basic ways



Eliza Fraser (left) and Charlotte Rampling (right) in *Eliza Fraser* (Sensational York) and *Eliza Fraser*.



Faiman (Mr. Peckinpah) does his best to recruit Carl (Steve Racke), after he has been beaten by Tim (Peter Faiman) in *The Last of the Knucklemen*.

of making a film, one is to make indigenous films, made solely for our local market and for less than \$400,000, and the other is to make international films on larger budgets (\$1 million or more). The international films can also be made in two ways: either with Australian directors working in the U.S., or by producers acting themselves up like a Los Angeles independent producer-packaging, but based in Australia.

It would be a great pity, however, if our best people are splintered off at the very point when we have to solve the problem of breaking into the international market.

High Rolling

The next film was "High Rolling," which you produced...

One couldn't describe *High Rolling* as a success, though it did break breaking once four or five years after its release.

I am very fond of *High Rolling*, although at some stage it didn't come off. There is a slight problem in Jo Batterson's performance, which goes over a bit, and the bonding aspect works only slightly. Still, I think [our Aussie] is a fine director and the film only narrowly misses capturing the spirit of a good AIP road film. *Mad Max* is certainly handling better, but one can easily see the progression from *Stone* to *High Rolling* to *Max* *Max*.

What happened to Hicagon in this period between "Eliza" and "Last of the Knucklemen"?

If you compare what happened to Hicagon with the South Australian film *Then Correlation*, the difference is that while the SAFC may seem to have a comparatively

successful track record, it probably won't be 33 or 50 million. If it was a commercial operation, it would be bankrupt, but it can go on because the debts are presumably written off by the South Australian Government.

However, it is significant that the SAFC is moving close towards a commercial program like Hicagon's. It is using John Kennedy and Alvin Hicagon on Pacific Island, which is like our Australia After Dark. You have Bruce Beresford, who basically occupies the same position that I occupied in Hicagon, doing a Williamson play, *The Club*. It is, in fact, moving into that mainstream middle area of drama, with the emphasis on entertainment. It is trying to get away from the culturally respectable stuff with which it made its reputation.

The Last of the Knucklemen

After "High Rolling" came "The Last of the Knucklemen," which is a play that dates back to 1973. What did you change the rights for?

Before we started on *Eliza Faiman*, I thought Hicagon should make a male bonding film, and the three possibilities were *Naughty Boy*, *The Gold Angry Star* and *The Last of the Knucklemen*. We looked at them and felt *Knucklemen* was the best.

We were delayed in buying the rights, though, because the play had been put on overseas, and the Melbourne Theatre Company, which owned the rights, was trying to sell it to the Yanks. Then they fell through and we inherited them.

How is the screenplay different from the play?

The problem with a play like *Knucklemen* is that one wants to open it out and show the court environment. On the other hand,

one needs to maintain the claustrophobia of being locked in a horrible life shed with eight strangers, a million miles apart now here.

Like many Australian properties, *Knucklemen* is a story about a group, rather than an individual. Although it is called *The Last of the Knucklemen*, Tarzan (Gerard Kennedy) isn't the hero. The man who starts all the dramatic incidents is Peary (Mike Prickett). Now, my first intention was to make Tarzan and Michael (Michael Balfour) and make them into one character, thereby giving it a stronger dramatic bite. After all, Michael is in Tarzan 35 years later. I also reduced the role of Tom (Peter Faiman), and even had Peary finally replacing Tarzan-Michael in the knucklemen. But it turned out to be much less interesting.

I then tried starting with the robbery, but that just became another "bunk robber on the run", and the whole main aspect was lost. So I stayed fairly close to the play, though I did try to flesh out certain characters and put more action where there was dialogue. There is probably only a third of the original dialogue in the film. I hope I kept the best bits.

If there is a weakness in the film, it is in the front half where one has to establish the characters. I think there are enough clues to keep the thing moving, but the drama doesn't really start till the scene of Michael's down the river. From then on, it is all action. You are really seeing, "Right, those are the cards in the pack, let's get on with the game."

Which characters did you find out?

Well, Peary was so much more changed in the play, he was a clever but really a coward, a powder-puff. I felt he had to have real menace, and be a genuine threat to Tarzan.

There is also much more of Tarzan (Gerard Kennedy) than in the play. I questioned that he was an elderly dodger with a little bit and so on. I gave him a more menacing and coherent character.

How successful was Australian filmmaker here in creating an audience for their film?

We were very successful in the first three or four years, but as we moved away from the actor as a subject, we lost the connection we had established with the audience. It is not just that we were shy, as that we forgot we were in show-business.

The connection is in the earlier film — and perhaps I show my bias here — because they were more conventional. The newer films are more a lament for the past, and for money. They don't have the necessary abrasive, confronting connection with their audience.

Look, for example, at the number of films which amount to a rehash to change. *The Informant* is about Cypriotes being replaced by a jury. *The Picture Show* Mike is about sound films replacing the man who starts his silent reels around in a horse and buggy. *Newsfront* is about the demise of the national connection with the subject of television.

I believe that a lot of this lamentation is sentimentality, and a lot of it is anxiety. I know, for instance, that the very worst reporting on television is a no-nonsense triumph of integrity compared with the junk we saw coming out of *Crossed*. The theme of *Newsfront* is basically that old Labor Party notion of what Australia really became, the lost future we were all deprived of.

If you compare today's film with those of the early days, you also find that the early ones had something which you could call hope.

The film which marked the changeover from energy to reflectiveness was *Sunday Too Far Away*. It was, if you like, a *Conformist* Film. Its type film and was the first to go for "good taste" at the expense of energy. The film performed well, but the tendency it exemplified turned out to be a killer of audience.

Don't get me wrong, I believe in art. But to me art is the way in which one offers the material into the most complex, affecting and shrewd way. But if art is art, as it often is, as in abundance of things that will offend, people — it is "good taste" — then I reach for my gun like Götter. ★

Filmography

Feature Film

- 1940 *John Arden* — director, screenplay
- 1941 *South* — director, producer
- 1950 *Little (The Chalky Character)* — screenplay
- 1951 *John Arden* — director, screenplay
- 1952 *Patience* — director, producer
- 1954 *John Arden* — director, screenplay
- 1955 *John Arden* — director, screenplay
- 1956 *John Arden* — director, producer
- 1957 *John Arden* — director, producer
- 1958 *The Last of the Knucklemen* — director, screenplay, producer

Documentaries

- 1940-43 *Australian Act* — 13 film series
- 1943 *Family People*
- 1945 *Australia* — Australia
- 1950 *Going Back to Nothing*

Shorts

- 1940 *The Price*
- 1940-45 *The Adventure of Sebastian the Pig* — television series
- 1944 *John Arden*
- 1944 *Knock's Last Year* — made in U.S.
- 1951 *The Red Caps of the World*
- 1954 *John Arden*
- 1957 *John Arden*

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Nagisa Oshima

Continued from P. 30

certainly support those who are fighting for the basic issues of women's liberation.

In the Japanese mass media there is often a reaction to particular words, or terms, such as women's lib, or feminism . . .

Because the term women's lib is despised, it's a good one.

For that reason?

Yes. Feminism as the other hand has become an attractive term, the women who support it are fakes.

Because it is popular?

No, not popular, but it has become acceptable. Women's lib was also a fad in a way, but it was disliked. Those who supported it were also hated by the male society.

Do you think the situation will improve for women in Japan?

Yes, in fact it is getting better, little by little, but in reality, it has a long way to go. I am not sure young women today have the strength and determination to fight in the way that, for instance, the women of my generation, who were struggling just after World War 2, did. The form may improve — as far as legislation for equality in jobs and so on is concerned — but whether the actual situation will improve for Japanese women is a different question.

Can "Empire of the Senses" be seen as a political film?

It's not a film that directly takes up political questions, but by the very fact that it does not deal with politics, it can be seen as very political. As for judging it, that's entirely up to the public. I don't think there is any need for me to say whether it is a political or not.

It is often suggested that Japan is not a class society, but recent years have seen the creation of a new elite or class through the mass media — the people who can use their access to the media to establish a position of power, whose views are often heard on television, for instance . . .

The Japanese really don't think of power as something they have as individuals. Nor do they have a consciousness of it as a class. You can see this Japanese. "Do you have power?" and they will all say they don't.

I don't think the people at the top in the mass media have a class consciousness either. They may comprise a class, but they are not aware of it.

In that sense, it is different from

the class division in Western Europe. In other words, the only thing that makes a class a class is the consciousness of being one. In Japan, for instance, the workers really don't have a class consciousness. Consequently, I have great doubts whether even what may appear as a class society is the same as its European counterpart.

Although they may not be a class, this "mediocrity," people who are famous enough in Japan, have every access to the media to say anything they want, voice opinions and have them repeated. Though not unique in Japan, it seems to me a particularly acute problem . . .

I am against, and argued by, manipulation from television in the era of propaganda control. But that is not the same as saying these people have power. The Japanese reaction, as a homogeneous society, is that we can't do much about it.

In other words, either class has a different reaction to something than everyone else, people tend to be delighted that they have the same as so others. That is the greatest problem of Japan and the Japanese. If the people who actually have power really are aware of it, then there may be more of a chance for Japan. But they are not conscious of it, and the people below them are not aware that others must power either.

Young people in Japan today seem to have a more resigned attitude towards politics than people in their

thirties and forties. They don't believe things will or can change. But they seem to have become better at enjoying life . . .

Yes, I think so too.

Do you think that is a positive change, or is it just resignation?

I don't think one can say that it is either good or bad. It's true that there has been a change in that direction. That is to say, when it comes to their relationship to the world around them, rather than being a bit actively serious things in action, they have learned how to enjoy whatever the world brings their way. So they have become good at seeing pleasure, as you say. But that's neither good nor bad.

How do you feel about the present situation in Japanese cinema?

To put it in an extreme way, I am not at the least interested in the Japanese film situation today.

Are there any other contemporary Japanese filmmakers whose work interests you?

I make my own film, I am not interested in other films.

Do you see any Australian films at Cannes last year?

No, I don't go to film. It's as simple as that.

Are there any Japanese writers with whom you would be interested in working?

No.

You often use documentary material in your films. How do you view the relationship between documentary and fiction?

A good film is a good film, whether it is documentary or drama. Only the method is different. I can't generalize on that.

In future films, will individual human relationships continue to be the subject — the suffering of a single human being, rather than social comment?

Yes, I think so. I don't care to make any general social or political comment.

Is there a specific problem, or kind of person that interests you at the moment — for your next film?

I am thinking about all sorts of things at the moment (they pass) since you read my book.¹ You read Japanese, don't you?

Yes, but I haven't read it.

It would have been a good idea if you had read my book.

FILMOGRAPHY

Features

- 1978 *As in the case of* (As in the case of Love and Sex)
1977 *Golden Pigeon* (Golden Pigeon)
1976 *Love in the Rain* (Love in the Rain)
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Sachiko Hidari

Continued from P. 38

You are not part of any women's movement, even though you support women's rights . . .

To participate in a movement because it has become fashionable is to be dishonest with oneself. These movements have always been directed to foreign cultures, but they have not come to the stage where they produce something from within and solve problems in their own way.

How do you feel about the image of women as presented in Japanese films?

On the whole, it is the life of women as seen by men.

As an actress, I have always battled with directors over their images of women. There is always a conflict between the image of a woman as seen by a man, and as seen by a woman.

In *The Far Road* I had the opportunity to portray men as seen by a woman for a change.

1. When *The Far Road* was screened in April last year, I was called on to give the new edition of my book.
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FILMNEWS

'C' Television

Continued from P. 22

The other reason for rejecting stations to a final time slot was that the more creative, but expensive, fledgling children's programs were thereby afforded some protection from program managers who might choose to view content as incompatible to them.

It was expected that FACTS would emphasize economic considerations rather than the question of social responsibility about children's television, although I believed FACTS was mistaken in taking a hard-line attitude. There was more to be gained from a softer and less stereotyped approach.

One of the points that did not emerge in the press coverage of the recommendations was that the seven-member committee which prepared the guidelines included Rex Hoadley, managing director of Southern Television Corporation, Bruce Hatten, chairman and managing director of SBC, and E. L. Latta, and David Morgan of FACTS. So the committee does not simply comprise people who say nothing about the industry at best but espouse in recent media coverage.

It is difficult to understand the logic behind the extreme enforcers of the Children's Program Committee's function. It was clear from the time of the Self-Regulation Report, in July 1977, that if programs were to be classified 'C', some would be rejected. But no one referred to this until it happened. Then the reason of program was described as censorship, and "some of the most notorious and adversarial elements of government intervention."

FACTS' stance on the classifications, made at this time by their Federal director, James Mulvaney, was in part:

"For the first time in the history of broadcasting in Australia, a Government agency has assumed full control of part of the broadcast day, deciding to viewers what they should watch."

Not even the Prime Minister's disclaimer or experts is able to talk without the tone of day but addresses to the viewer need to do so between 6 p.m. and 3 p.m."

It is unfortunate that stations are not receiving full credit as a class when they are doing more for children's television than they have in the past.

FACTS' views did not represent the industry as a whole, historically it has tended to be dominated by the views of the Sydney stations. Privately, many stations vehemently disagree with the views FACTS state publicly on the children's issue. Many stations accept the guidelines and are getting on successfully with the job of producing, buying, and commissioning children's production.

In preparing its second report on the classification of children's programs in the Tribunal in June this year, the Committee tried to clarify points it had made before, but which seemed to have been misunderstood in some quarters. It said:

"In classifying programs, the Committee is not deciding the suitability of programs for children, that is, it is not making an endorsement. The task which the Committee has been given is to decide the suitability of programs for presentation during that particular time of day which the Tribunal has decided should be set aside for programs specifically designed for children. The Committee's decisions are made in the light of the guidelines which have been adopted for this particular purpose. The Committee recognizes that there are many

programs which are quite suitable for children to watch, and which, only once, in some cases, be broadcast for them to watch, but unless a program has been specifically designed for children, in terms of the guidelines, these programs must be excluded from that particular time—from 6 p.m. to 3 p.m. on weekdays—unless the Tribunal has in effect declared to be a 'children's hour'."

"In classifying a program 'C', the Committee is not guaranteeing, or predicting, success for that program. Further, it is not doing any justice to present that program during the 'C' period, but it is merely stating that should a station wish to present it at that time, that it is a suitable program for that purpose."

"There have been certain statements made to the effect that the Committee is interested in confining school hours into after-school television, and that programs must have some form of educational qualities in order to gain a 'C' classification. The Committee considers that in view of the decisions which it has held with members of the industry, and the material which has so far been published, it would be clear that nothing is further from the members' minds. We therefore repeat that programs must first of all be entertaining for children, and that education, formally-advocated programs are not likely to meet this criterion."

There was no press comment on the Committee's second report.

It will take time for expertise in children's television to develop, but local production also needs funds, resources and ideas. It may be two or three years before we can be assured that high standards of Australian children's programs have been achieved and are here to stay.

The role of the Tribunal will be critical in this development. So far, against the predictions of many, the Tribunal has backed the Committee's recommendations. This means there is now strong pressure on the Government from various sections of the industry to rescind Mr. Bruce Gyngold from his position as chairman of the Tribunal. This appears this position has been strengthened because of his attempts to carry through the Tribunal's policy on children's television. At the time of writing, the Government had not accepted Mr. Gyngold's offer to undertake a second term.

Should Mr. Gyngold be replaced, then the future of children's television would be uncertain. For unless the Tribunal remains intact, there would be no reason, other than the goodwill of some stations, for children's programs to be developed. And we all know what can happen to goodwill in the economic market place.

The Children's Program Committee was established in a rush of years of work, lobbying, research, and submissions to inquiries by many groups and individuals. While and much of all this effort is to be confined to begin this group and the Committee, the Committee and the industry and the industry and the Tribunal, then it is the children who will suffer.

As one little girl wrote to me:

"Like many children in my age-group, I got sick to death of seeing re-runs, I saw Gilligan's Island, Mulvaney's Navy and the Brady Bunch."

Sadly, there must be some more entertainment alternatives than that second-rate rubbish! There always may have been good when they first came out, but after showing them about 10 times over and over, you must agree it becomes rather monotonous.

"This is only a short letter, but I hope I have made my viewpoint clear enough—I just have to deal with re-runs! But if it isn't you are doing something about this, will I hope you'll help me!"

"If you're allowed, could you tell me what

is in line for children's television in the 1980 and '81 seasons please?"

I would like to be able to reply and say, "By 1981, you will be able to choose between a school, relax and watch evening, enjoyable, interesting and different television made especially for you", because that is what the Tribunal is trying to achieve. *

The Australian Broadcasting Tribunal Children's Program Committee's recommendations:

1. Programs produced for the 6-10 year age group should be classified 'C' or 'C+' and not 'C++' (programs should not show more than 10% of the 'C++' content).
2. Content area of 10% or less in programs may be shown in the 'C++' period (6 p.m. to 3 p.m.) each week, Monday to Friday, if it is considered to be suitable for the 'C++' period.
3. The subject matter of a program, regardless of length (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 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